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ABSTRACT

This report describes a 1979-80 study of work experience programs in secondary schools in Western Australia and assessment of Education Department guidelines and support structures available to schools. Following a brief introduction (chapter 1), chapter 2 discusses the history and organization of work experience, a popular transition education activity. A rationale for work experience is developed in chapter 3 by illustrating related transition ideas. Chapter 4 outlines study design and methodology. It presents objectives and criteria and describes the questionnaire survey of all government schools and subsequent case studies of seven of them. Chapters 5 and 6 present study findings. Chapter 5 focuses on dimensions, aims, and operational features of work experience programs in the schools. These conclusions are made: (1) teachers, employers, parents, and students are in favor of the programs; (2) many teachers consider the programs time-consuming and largely irrelevant; (3) responsibility is commonly given to one staff member; and (4) schools need assistance in adapting guidelines to their particular situations. Chapter 6 discusses issues that emerged from data, including coordination, integration, support structures for work experience, sex role stereotyping, rural schools, and effectiveness of guidelines. Chapter 7 generalizes conclusions. Appendixes include discussion of initiatives in transition education and survey questionnaires. (YLB)

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AN EVALUATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES
OPERATING IN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

S. Robertson
and
P. Dunnell

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FOREWORD

The Education Department of Western Australia has a longstanding involvement in activities designed to promote a smooth transition by students into the world of work. In 1965 the first work experience programmes were conducted in a metropolitan high school. In 1969 the Education Department appointed the first Youth Education Officers to senior high schools. These officers, together with school Guidance Officers, quickly became convinced of the benefits which work experience could offer to secondary students. Consequently, these programmes have grown to involve more and more students in more and more schools.

In part, the rapid growth of work experience programmes explains my interest in their evaluation. Further, recent changes in the concept of work experience, particularly those arising from the current political and public interest in transition education, make such a review particularly appropriate.

This report describes an extensive study, involving the collection of survey data from almost all of the secondary schools in the State. The information from seven schools is examined in depth. The results of the study will be of considerable use to facilitating planning for these programmes. However, perhaps the greatest value of the report will be in its use by schools in facilitating self-analysis of individual work experience programmes within the more general context of transition education activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank community members of the work experience committee without whose valuable assistance the programmes would not operate so smoothly and who supported the idea that work experience programmes be evaluated. I am also pleased to record here my appreciation to all those employers, employees, members of various community organizations, service clubs and employees of my own Department, all of whose efforts have contributed to the growth and smooth operation of these programmes.

Finally, I would also like to thank the persons principally involved with this study - Ms Susan Robertson, formerly of the Research Branch and now of Nedlands CAE, and Mr Peter Dunnell of the Research Branch.

D. Morrison

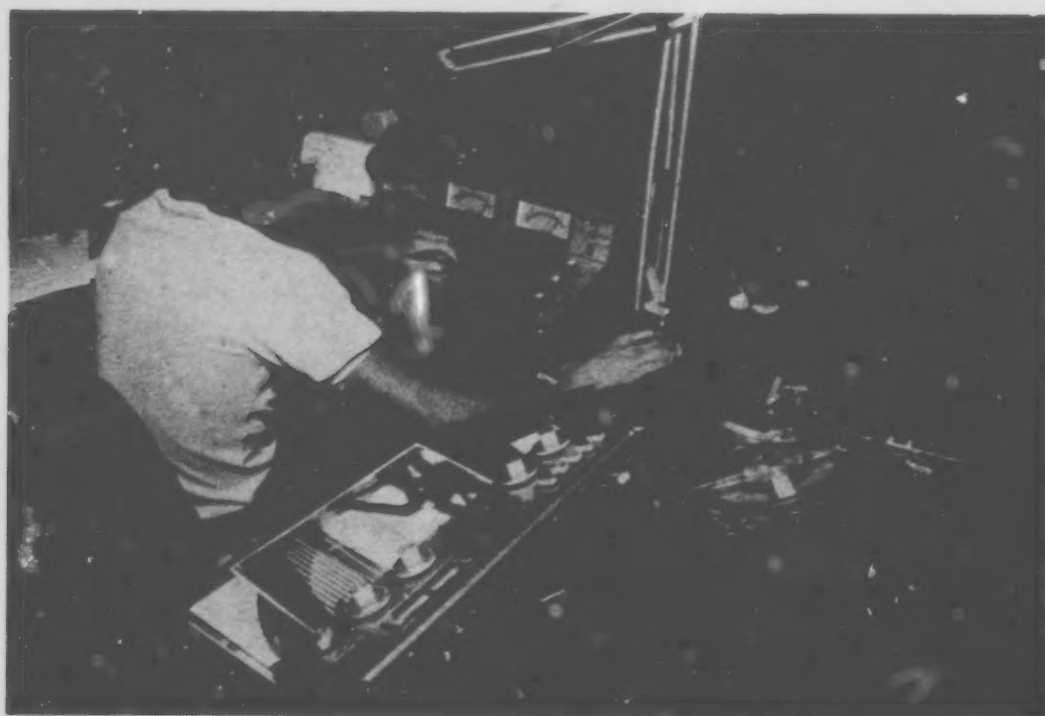
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Photograph 1: Work experience as a radio announcer



Photograph 2: Work experience as a survey hand

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade State Education Departments within Australia have incorporated work experience activities into their career education programmes. This trend parallels developments in other Western countries. Work experience is a technique which can be used in the social and vocational development of students. An underlying assumption of these activities is that students will benefit from active participation in work situations while they are still attending school. A major purpose of the activity is to assist students through the transition from school to full-time work. Educators expect that, by means of such activities, individuals may develop a greater awareness of their potential and interests, thereby being better able to make appropriate and realistic career decisions.

Western Australian data indicate that the number of upper secondary students participating in work experience has increased from 1 650 in 1976 to approximately 12 500 in 1981, which now represents some 20.3 per cent of the total State secondary school population. In addition, work experience schemes are found in technical colleges and non-government schools.

During 1979 the Education Department commissioned this study in order to describe and evaluate work experience schemes in Government secondary schools. The study includes both description and analysis of current programmes together with an assessment of the Departmental guidelines and support structures available to schools. Data gathering has been achieved by both case study and survey techniques.

The report comprises seven chapters. Chapter 2 describes both the history and the organization of work experience. Chapter 3 illustrates related transition issues. Chapter 4 specifies study design and methodology. Chapters 5 and 6 consider, respectively, findings relating to scope and organization, and particular issues emerging as important in both planning and operating work experience programmes. Chapter 7 is concerned with conclusions drawn from the study.

CHAPTER 2

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

School personnel will be quick to point out that work experience in Western Australian secondary schools is not an entirely new concept. What is new, however, is the extent and scale on which work experience now operates. As will be argued in Chapter 3, the pressure upon schools to respond to a rapidly changing world of work has resulted in the initiation of a number of activities and educational strategies designed to facilitate transition from school to work. Significant among these activities has been the development of work experience, perceived as a means of bringing students into contact with the working community and the range of varied social and personal experiences which emanate from it.

2.1 A historical perspective

In Western Australia one of the first formal work experience programmes for secondary students was conducted at the Belmont Senior High School in 1965. The scheme was supported by a local Rotary Club, and involved students from the pre-vocational course. From this beginning, other schools began to introduce similar programmes, both for less academically inclined students and for those studying business education. In the latter case, practical clerical skills and 'real-life' experiences were particularly appropriate in the learning process. However, at that time work experience did not appear to have relevance for other groups of students. Nonetheless, a gradual growth did occur. The programmes expanded steadily as schools developed responses to their own enrolment and employment situations.

In 1969, the Youth Education Officer (YEO) scheme was established with the appointment of eight officers to positions in secondary schools. Since then, numbers have grown to 73. The role of the Youth Education Branch has focused upon the smooth integration of the early school-leaver into the community. The work of the YEO was related to helping the students who might leave school in Years 9, 10 or 11 to understand the workings of community. In particular it was to assist these students realize their employment potential and acquire job-seeking skills, including those skills required to function within the workforce. An important task for YEOs was the development of work experience programmes within their schools.

Work experience therefore developed into a significant component of the YEOs' activities. This led to the appointment of three work experience co-ordinators in 1980. These officers are responsible for co-ordinating school

programmes, encouraging community interest in the scheme, and improving school-employer co-operation. Six part-time co-ordinators with similar responsibilities have also been appointed to major rural centres.

The appointment of Career Advisers to schools is a relatively new development. In 1976 a small number were appointed for the purpose of organizing and administering vocational information and counselling services in the school. This also included the co-ordination of work experience programmes within the school. By 1980, 47 Career Advisers were attached to district high schools and five to senior high schools.

As with any educational change or innovation, work experience could have grown, stagnated or died. However, its popularity with students, together with the appointment of more personnel, ensured its continued development. The programme grew rapidly, encouraged by developments in other States, particularly Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.¹ Each had programmes in various stages of development, together with documentation of the trials and tribulations experienced. Victoria has enacted complicated legislation governing the operation of work experience, together with numerous explanations (Cole, 1975). New South Wales responded to its own particular situation by commissioning the Scott Report (1976), while South Australia appointed a Work Experience Co-ordinator to work in its Transition Education Unit.

By 1973 work experience programmes had become so common that education authorities began to look more closely at their implications. In particular, the legal implications, the safety hazards and the attitudes of the unions, required attention.

It was not until 1976 that a Work Experience Committee was formed in Western Australia. This Committee was composed of representatives from the Trades and Labor Council, Education Department, State School Teachers' Union of W.A., Western Australian Council of State School Organizations, Perth Chamber of Commerce, and Chamber of

1. See Blakers (1978, pp.287-405) for an explanation of some of these programmes.

Manufactures. Its task was to establish acceptable ground rules for the operation of work experience programmes. The issues involved were related to the complexities of the relationship between the school and community relevant to the introduction of work experience. They included questions of

- Industrial regulations or legislation relating to the employment of children.
- Indemnity for students, employers, teachers and others involved in work experience programmes.
- Payment for students involved in work experience.
- Restrictions on the duration and frequency of work experience arrangements.

In working toward solutions, precedents were available from other States. One possible approach was the enactment of complex legislation, as in Victoria. However, it was decided to adopt an approach which was based on an agreement between all parties. The important issues dealt with were payment, insurance, length of time to be spent in work experience, and age of participants.

(a) Payment

It was decided that students would not be paid, and where an employer chose to make a small gift this would not be regarded as payment. However, gratuities were not required, for it was felt that this might shift the emphasis from what should be an educational experience into an industrial one. Apart from that objection, it was also felt that the scheme would have difficulty in expanding if payment was required, primarily because

- (i) It would become an expensive undertaking for employers because, on some occasions, quite large numbers of students would be placed with one organization.
- (ii) Government departments would be prevented from participation because of inability to pay students.
- (iii) Unless the students were paid at the award rate, unions would have cause for complaint that students were being underpaid.
- (iv) If payment was made, the employers would also be required to contribute to the workers' compensation scheme for insurance coverage of the students.

Work experience involves employers in additional responsibility and effort. They have to provide supervision and help for young and inexperienced students and also contribute to the evaluation and reporting essential to the whole enterprise. If, in addition, employers are required to pay students and, as a result, take out workers' compensation, they may become involved in substantial extra costs.

The recommendation that students need not be paid is normally made clear to students, employers and parents. Should the employer wish to make a nominal gift to the student, this becomes a matter between the employer and the student. The Trades and Labor Council has requested that, where a student undertakes the full duties of an employee, he must be paid full award rates. However, where he 'helps' or observes a skilled worker, he may receive a lesser amount, but only as a gratuity. This area has been sensitive, however, and one concern which has been expressed is that permanent jobs may become redundant where students through work experience are used to provide the required labour. The ground rules established have been aimed at preventing exploitation. Negotiation with the Trades and Labor Council on this matter has established that the unions do not object to the scheme, provided that students do not deprive adults of full-time or even part-time employment. In the operation of the scheme there have been very few complaints.

(b) Insurance

The Education Department holds two insurance policies with the State Government Insurance Office, covering the needs of students and employers. These are detailed in the official guidelines.¹

A Students' Accident Policy. This is a standard policy to cover students participating in work experience programmes should they be involved in an accident, regardless of cause. The policy also covers periods spent in travelling from home to the workplace and return. Public Liability Insurance Policy. This covers the legal liability of the Department, firms, organizations and individuals for bodily injury and damage to property of students participating in secondary school work experience projects conducted in accordance with the Education Department's Regulations. Such cover was also extended from \$200 000 to \$500 000 and, in this circumstance, the employer and employees are deemed to be servants of the Minister for Education. The indemnity provided under this policy is limited to claims which arise

1. See Work Experience Programmes - A Guide for Teachers. Western Australian Education Department, 1977.

from accidents caused through defects in buildings, equipment or machinery, or through negligence on the part of an employee of the Department or the firm. Schools must notify the Department of students being placed on work experience, nominating the students for whom insurance cover is required.

(c) Length of placement

In order to protect students against exploitation and to avoid possibility of displacement of employees by students, time limits have been set on the length of placements. Students should not have more than 10 full days' (or equivalent) work experience in any one school term, or more than 20 full days' (or equivalent) in any one school year.

(d) Age of students

It is generally accepted that students aged fourteen years and upward are eligible to participate in work experience. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that students are not placed in situations which will present either a moral or a physical danger. Early school-leavers who remain associated with the school for some pastoral care purpose are also able to engage in work experience, although the number involved is very small.

As a consequence of negotiations between unions, employers and the Education Department, there was a need to formalize the agreements and to disseminate guidelines to all schools' personnel. These form the content of the Education Department publication referred to earlier. This document sets out the aims and objectives for work experience, the legal obligations, administrative requirements and evaluation procedures, as well as providing additional information in the form of student observation sheets and employer assessment sheets.

The guidelines are the only official policy statement available to schools concerning the conduct of work experience. Schools therefore are free to operate and develop their own schemes within the context they establish. These will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 4, as they form the basis upon which this evaluation of work experience has been undertaken.

2.2 Summary

In Western Australia, work experience has become a popular 'transition education' activity. A historical perspective shows that the Education Department of Western Australia has been active in developing educational strategies and programmes that seek principally to assist youths in transition, rather than those which respond only to problems related to unemployment. Various structural mechanisms have been developed which have assisted in establishing work experience as an important school-community activity. The next chapter develops a rationale for work experience, while Chapter 4 describes the study design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES: A RATIONALE

An examination of work experience programmes necessitates an analysis of both the context within which such programmes have developed and their expected outcomes.

Work experience has developed rapidly within a framework of 'transition education', an area given progressively higher priority by both educationalists and politicians in the past five years. In the Western Australian context, 'transition education' is interpreted as '... a term used to describe various educational programmes and services (at the secondary level) aimed at enhancing the readiness of youth for post-school life, including employment' (Louden, 1980, p.3).

Criticism has been directed towards education systems for their lack of initiative in this area. However, not all such criticism seems justified, for educators have, historically, acknowledged at least some need for readjustment of the more traditional school processes. The following section focuses specifically upon a number of these issues, particularly as they apply to work experience as a transition activity.

3.1 Transition education issues and work experience

There has been much recent debate regarding the appropriate roles schools should play in preparing students for movement into the workforce. This has occurred at a time characterized by social, political and economic uncertainty. A chief concern of governments, not only in Australia but in many parts of Western Europe and the United States, has been the rapid rise in levels of unemployment, particularly among youth.

In political debate there appears to have been a failure to separate the two issues of high youth unemployment and the responsibilities of schools in the transition from school to work. It is logical that the two should be differentiated. The concern about transition from school to work has occurred partly because of the dramatic changes taking place in industry and commerce. While conceding that increasing unemployment tends to exacerbate the difficulties students face when moving from school to work, that phenomenon cannot be claimed to be the fundamental cause of increasing attention being given to transition activities. For example, in Western Australia, Youth Education Officers (YEOs) were first appointed in 1969. Work experience programmes also gained momentum during this time. Such developments are significant because they occurred well before the rise in youth unemployment, a phenomenon of the mid-1970s.

From the point of view of the Western Australian Education Department, transition education is seen as 'a re-orientation of general education so that young people, especially early school-leavers, may be assisted to bridge the gap between school and post school' (Louden, 1980, p.3). In order to achieve this, work experience and other related activities have been developed, expanded and supported through Departmental initiatives.

It is pertinent, then, to dwell briefly on some of the possible reasons for the increased pressures directed towards schools to re-orient education in order to assist students in transition. As the workplace grows in complexity, parents may come to feel less capable of passing on to their children accurate information about careers and the world of work. This viewpoint is strongly supported by Wilson's findings in Victoria:

Most parents felt very strongly that they did not have sufficient knowledge or understanding about jobs, further education, entry paths to various types of employment, the labour market situation, or the curriculum and organization of schools these days. (1979, p.231)

Consequently, families have tended to rely increasingly upon schools to prepare students for community and work roles.

Pressure for change has also emerged from educational sources, which generally encourage schools to make positive attempts to bridge the gap between school and community. Informed opinion contends that the development of students is limited if only experiences which can be offered solely within the school are utilized. Therefore, the argument proceeds, they should be broadened by incorporating community resources which offer more varied, relevant and practical learning experiences.

The retention of academically less able students within the educational system, due partly to lack of employment opportunities and a growing need for certification, has placed new pressures on schools. There is an increasing awareness that such students require different sorts of educational experiences, some of which may be found within the workplace.

A further reason relates to the students themselves. The gap between schools and the workplace has been highlighted in a number of studies focusing upon students and employers. Sturman (1979), in an extensive review of the literature concerned with transition from school to work, cites several research findings that large numbers of school-leavers felt that school experiences had not provided them with sufficient skills to cope in the working world.

Poole and Simkin's study (1976, p.28) indicated that students wanted more factory visits and work experience, and the facility for gaining credit for time spent in the community. Wright and Headlam (1976) found that the adolescents in their study wanted more emphasis placed upon personal and social development by schools, together with a greater involvement in the real life of the community. Other researchers (Tinney, 1976; Poole, 1976; Connell, 1975; Williams and Priest, 1979) have also reported student-employer differences regarding expectations and attitudes towards schooling and the world of work. An overall conclusion from these studies was that much of the problem arose from an inadequate flow of ideas and information across the school-work interface, and that activities undertaken within the workplace (such as work experience) should be supported. Evidence suggests that a significant number of students feel unprepared for the world of work and regard schools as important in helping them prepare for a role within a rapidly changing society.

A final reason concerns employers. Williams and Priest (1979) report that although employers did not expect school leavers to have specific pre-vocational training, they did stress the need for young people to have acquired some understanding of the nature and operation of industry, together with an appreciation of employer expectations. Employers believed such vocational preparation to be the task of the school, although they acknowledged a responsibility to assist through work experience schemes.

Such findings may have influenced the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training (1979) to make the following recommendation:

Secondary schools should accept that they have an obligation to assist pupils in the transition from school to work, and schools should give systematic attention to

- 1) An extension of guidance and counselling so that school-leavers and teachers have a better idea of the skills and attitudes required for particular occupations.
- 11) An extension of work experience, particularly for early school-leavers (1979, p.132).

Most teachers would probably agree with the need to teach their pupils how to improve their knowledge of the range of possible employment, of the processes involved in various business and industrial jobs, of the relationships between management and labour, and of the place of

productive work in our society. Such a viewpoint does not necessarily argue for a strong vocational bias in the curriculum. Rather, the intention is to increase individual flexibility and adaptability.

Schools have also been criticized for developing and implementing programmes related to work and in particular work experience. Such criticism requires some attention, for there is no universal agreement within the community (or even among educators) that schools should become involved in these ventures. Some dissensions arise from the view that, through these programmes, schools are reinforcing a work ethic by deliberately developing job-seeking and work-related skills. Schools are also criticized for placing students in work experience situations at times when unemployment among young people is increasing, causing further decline in actual employment opportunities. These critics ask whether it is right for the school to indirectly reinforce the work ethic by preparing students for work through the conscious development of job-seeking skills or, the placement of students in work situations, when employment opportunities for students may in fact decline.

Answers to these questions are likely to be influenced by the fact that, even in today's circumstances, for a large proportion of the population work will probably be a reality. It is acknowledged that such work will not necessarily be organized in the same manner as now. Levels of unemployment decrease as the age of the cohort increases, so that the high levels evident in the 15-to-19-years bracket decrease. On present indications, today's school leavers are very likely to have jobs by the time they reach their mid-twenties. This situation may not continue over the next decade, but the role that schools play in reflecting the conservative aspects of society is also relevant. Work, full-time and career-oriented, is still an expectation most people have for their children. Our schools probably have to reflect this expectation and provide children with as comprehensive and realistic knowledge of the world of work as they possibly can. This implies developing and maintaining an awareness not only of changes in the structure of the workforce but also of the very nature of work itself.

A second point worthy of consideration is that of the role of the school in preparing students for the workforce. It could be argued that workplaces should assume the responsibility for the assimilation of new workers into the workforce. Alternatively, if schools claim the development of skills useful for integration into the community as one of their aims, then they presumably have a role in

providing students with skills which allow them to compete for available employment opportunities. As a result, preparation of students should by necessity occur in schools so that students are better able to make decisions about futures. However, as Chapters 5 and 6 will indicate, there is some debate in schools about these issues, and such debates may influence the nature and extent of work experience programmes within particular schools.

Nevertheless, State education departments have made concerted efforts to expand opportunities for students so they may undertake work experience. Assistance has also been forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government through the Transition to Work scheme. This was announced in November of 1979, making available an allocation of \$150m over a period of five years, to be matched by States. Under this scheme, States have undertaken a range of projects which are designed to assist youth in transition to the workplace. Several significant projects related to work experience which have been implemented under this scheme are described in Appendix A.

3.2 Transition education in rural centres

In any consideration of the transition from school to work, attention must be paid to the special problems in rural areas. Western Australia is characterized by a highly urbanized population and a high degree of centralization of facilities. For a majority of rural dwellers, this often means reduced direct access to services and facilities that are readily available to urban dwellers. It is not surprising, therefore, that difficulties related to the transition of adolescents from school to work are often compounded in rural locations.

Recent educational research is critical of the curriculum of rural schools, suggesting it lacks consideration for the special needs of rural youth. Turney et al. (1980), in a study of isolated schools in New South Wales, conclude that

The schools themselves tend to operate quite separately from the communities in which they are situated and there has been a notable lack of success in attempts to build a curriculum that is relevant to the life experiences and job aspirations of the large majority of students.

In a review of educational research, Edington (1970), suggests that rural youth receive less preparation for successful entry into the world of work and have a much narrower range of occupational aspirations than their urban counterparts. Other studies confirm that school-leavers

in rural areas have to choose from a much more restricted range of jobs of lower status in their immediate area than do students in urban areas.

The problem, therefore, concerns strategies for the development of a broader range of attitudes, values, career experiences and role models for rural students, relevant to their needs. The need to look beyond the rural community for employment has been heightened by relatively high rates of unemployment among rural youth, particularly females. Edgar (1979) suggests that rural students often require additional skills if they plan to, or are required to work in urban centres. For them, urban living is more complex and difficult to manage. Suggested skill deficiencies among rural youth include budgeting, use of public transport, job-seeking skills, using newspapers, finding accommodation and the efficient use of support services and agencies. Other researchers also note that, more than ever, students will be obliged to leave their home area for employment, vocational training or tertiary education. As a consequence, those students who lack experience of life away from home, or have not developed the ability to mix with large numbers of people, are bound to find urban life more difficult.

Work experience programmes, therefore, must cater for particular problems faced by rural youth. In Western Australia, one response has been to develop work experience programmes in Perth for students from several rural areas. In 1980, 250 rural students participated in city work experience for one week.

3.3 Summary

This chapter has sought to provide a framework for the consideration of work experience. The notion of transition education provides that framework.

Though activities such as work experience have become very popular, partly as a consequence of the present employment dilemma, effective transition education is not a solution to the problem of unemployment. Rather, transition education, and in particular work experience, has emerged as a response to a range of needs within the community. These include the growing complexity of the working world, the increased difficulty parents have in providing their children with appropriate information about the working world, and the pressure from students, educators and employers to provide students with an opportunity of developing a general understanding of the world of work. As a result, schools have tended to assume more responsibility in this area. The next chapter outlines the design and methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 The study framework

Designing a suitable study of work experience in Western Australian Government secondary schools is a complex task, particularly since four or more different types of programmes may be operating in each school. How to design this study to best evaluate all the possible outcomes of work experience is a general problem. Some of the outcomes of work experience programmes may be visible and obvious but changes in students and in school-community interactions as a consequence of work experience may be both more subtle and more important. Blakers (1978, p.401) has written of this problem, 'Those aspects of work experience which produce tangible results capable of objective measurement assure a validity by virtue of their objectivity, and a significance which over-rides less tangible and less easily measured but perhaps more important aspects'.

In the hope of covering both obvious and subtle outcomes, it was decided to use the key guidelines for operating work experience programmes set down by the Education Department as basic issues in the study. These guidelines are described in the next section.

By designing the study in this way it was assumed that adhering to these guidelines would allow schools to achieve at least some of the objectives stated by the Department. This approach would also allow an assessment of the extent to which schools' practices correspond with Departmental guidelines and an exploration of the reasons for any non-correspondence.

This study of work experience programmes had five main objectives. These were to

- (1) Describe the work experience programmes operating in Western Australian Government secondary schools with particular reference to

-
1. For example, work experience programmes may cater for the different needs of 'mainstream' students, alternative upper school students, vocational business education students as well as special class students - all with slightly different aims.

- Their objectives.
 - The number of schools involved.
 - The number, ages, year levels and range of abilities of students.
 - The duration and timing of the programmes.
 - The types of work experiences offered.
- (ii) Review the extent to which schools follow the guidelines set down by the Education Department.
- (iii) Review the effectiveness of those guidelines.
- (iv) Identify and analyse factors acting as constraints on the effectiveness and scope of work experience programmes.
- (v) Make the research findings available for policy making with respect to work experience.

4.2 Guidelines for the operation of work experience

The Education Department document Work Experience Programmes - A guide for teachers was intended to assist schools to establish and operate work experience programmes which would achieve the objectives of these programmes. The objectives were given as follows:

Well-planned work experience can help

- (i) Students to
- Become aware of the adult working world, which often proves so different from school and home.
 - Evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes; balance ambitions with reality.
 - Improve their knowledge of the career options and the facts and intangibles surrounding these options.
 - Decide on the educational goals which are relevant to the career or careers that interest them.
- (ii) Provide parents with
- An opportunity to gain a greater insight into their children's career potential and share in the preparation and evaluation processes of each work experience.
- (iii) Give employers
- The chance to contribute in practical ways to the career education of students in their community.

- (iv) Provide schools with opportunities for meaningful community involvement in education.

The key points of guidance given to schools in this document were that

(i) Schools should

- Visit employers and give full and adequate explanations of the scheme.
- Check the location of employment and make certain of its suitability.
- Offer work experience to a range of students, though priority should be given to those whom the schools feels would benefit most.
- Ensure that work experience is consistent with school policy.
- Consider individual meetings with students to establish individual needs and programmes.

(ii) Documentation should include

- Information and consent forms to parents and employers.
- Student application, observation and evaluation forms.
- Employer evaluation forms.
- Insurance notification.
- Staff notification of student participation.

(iii) The work experience programme should include

- Work experience for students as part of a total pre-employment education programme.
- Preparatory activities such as counselling, career exploration, and specific information (such as dress and attendance).
- As many other individuals (parents, staff, employers) as appropriate.
- Monitoring by staff and on-site assessment by students.
- Follow-up activities which allow students an opportunity to evaluate and reflect on the experience.
- Assessment of students by parents, employers and teaching staff.

These form the key criteria on which to evaluate the operation of work experience programmes. However, it must be remembered that these are guidelines only. As a consequence, schools have been free to interpret the guidelines according to the needs of their own particular communities. However, many schools have used these guidelines as the basis for establishing their work experience programmes. Since the Departmental framework was produced, many schools have gained considerable knowledge about the operation of work experience programmes knowledge which may indicate that some of the guidelines require amendment.

4.3 Strategies and instruments

It was decided the study would be undertaken using both survey and case study methods. Survey data would allow some generalization of the findings and indicate pertinent issues which could be explored in the case studies. The case studies sought to examine unique responses schools have developed and the problems they face in different environments. As a consequence, both quantitative and qualitative data are presented, in Chapters 5 and 6.

Developing the questions to be used in the questionnaire and the interview schedules began with a review of the relevant literature. Discussions were then held with various interested bodies and individuals, including Youth Education Branch, Guidance Branch, alternative upper school course representatives, the Chamber of Manufactures and various teachers and students. The major purposes were to discuss with various representatives their particular perspectives on work experience, to identify some of the key issues for the study and to determine how it could best be undertaken.

(a) Survey instruments

A questionnaire (see Appendix B) was developed to test the extent to which schools' operational procedures in work experience were consistent with Departmental guidelines. Much of this information was descriptive, relating to programme objectives, operation, perceived advantages and encountered difficulties. It was recognized that a range of responses was possible from each school because each could be operating a number of programmes. Gathering information on the range of activities occurring within each school without reducing the response rate required careful attention.

As well as a general questionnaire, a statistical return was developed which identified the sex, year level, employer and length of placement for all students involved in work experience since the start of 1979 (see Appendix C). It has been decided by the Education Department that this will be submitted regularly so that accurate records of work experience programmes can be kept.

Both instruments were trialled in four schools and follow-up discussions were held, looking carefully at each question. During September, 1979 the modified questionnaires were sent to the principal of every Government secondary school within Western Australia. The schools were requested to have the most appropriate person or persons complete the questionnaire and return it. The response rate was 99.2 per cent, with only one school failing to submit a return.

To determine the effectiveness of a city work experience for rural students, survey data were also collected from students who had participated in the Rural-City Work Experience Scheme during term one and part of term two, 1980. A questionnaire was administered to 303 students from 15 participating schools and produced a 92 per cent response rate. The questionnaire included questions such as the type of placement, career orientation, what they felt a city work experience offered as opposed to a country placement, and how they felt about working in the city after their experience.

(b) The case studies

More detailed data were collected from seven schools - a district high school, four rural senior high schools and two metropolitan senior high schools. This was undertaken to examine in closer detail the distinctive characteristics of the schools, and how they had accommodated the guidelines in their programmes. A criterion for selection, therefore, was that each school should represent a particular issue thought to be important in the operation of work experience.

The first case was a rural school in the Pilbara region, which had established close links with major employers. Although the community was not large, the school was able to offer experiences in the workplace to over 200 students. The second, a rural senior high school, had combined work experience with a career education programme, as well as initiating a co-ordination mechanism with other schools in the region.

The third case was a rural senior high school which operated work experience within a community that also assisted students from two outlying district high schools with placement in work experience programmes. A metropolitan senior high school was the fourth case study and was selected for its attempt to implement a transition education programme within the school, with work experience being an important part of the programme.

Fifth was a metropolitan senior high school of interest for its provision of an extensive work experience programme for a wide cross-section of its students and particularly for lower achievers. The sixth school was chosen as a typical district high school which had managed to operate a programme within a community with limited placement opportunities. This school also anticipated taking advantage of the Rural-City Work Experience Scheme. The seventh school was chosen to look specifically at the difficulties a rural town might have in trying to effect work experience where the range of opportunities for students was limited.

Entry to each case study school was negotiated initially with the Principal concerned. Details were discussed with the persons responsible for the operation of work experience (usually the Youth Education Officer or Careers Adviser). All schools concerned co-operated willingly.

The data collection involved a period of approximately four days in each school and community, interviewing staff, students, employers and other related community members. In each, a picture was assembled of the programme, including its operation, advantages, disadvantages, innovative features and difficulties. Semi-structured interview schedules were used with employers and students. Up to 16 students were interviewed in each school. They were selected randomly, though generally representative numbers of males and females were drawn from each year level and programme. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed. Employers were selected (approximately four in each community) according to their degree of involvement, whether they were able to offer information (of either a positive or a negative kind) and the type of industry represented. Notes were taken during these interviews and written up more fully later, when important issues were noted on each employer report. Interviews with teachers and community members were usually informal and undertaken in response to suggestions that particular persons might have information to contribute.

Validity checks were carried out in each community by raising with other interviewees issues which had emerged in earlier interviews. Particular viewpoints were discussed with the school staff as to whether they were valid interpretations of the programme in operation.

(c) Incidental data

Data which gave a more extensive idea of activities occurring at various levels were also gathered from schools in more informal ways. This usually resulted from one day or a half-day spent in a school discussing the work experience programme. Contacts were also made through Youth Education and Careers Adviser workshops where discussions were held with people involved in work experience. In this report such data are referred to only incidentally, often to provide illustrations of points raised in either or both the surveys or case studies.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has sought to outline the methodology used and to point out some of the difficulties to be faced in attempting to develop practical criteria for evaluating work experience programmes. Objectives and criteria for the evaluation, based upon the guidelines set down by the Department, have been presented. The next two chapters describe the findings of the study. Chapter 5 concentrates on the scope and organization of work experience, and Chapter 6 discusses several issues which emerged from the data.

CHAPTER 5

THE CONDUCT AND BENEFITS OF WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES

This and the following chapter will present and discuss the survey and case study data gathered during this project. This chapter will focus on the dimensions, aims and operational features of work experience programmes in the schools involved. The data reflect the situations late in 1979 for the survey schools and early in 1980 for the seven case study schools. Chapter 6 will discuss a number of issues that arose during the project, including co-ordination, sex-role stereotyping and the effectiveness of the Education Department's guidelines.¹

5.1 The nature and extent of work experience programmes

(a) School and student participation

There were 128 out of a possible 129 schools which responded to the survey and of these 108 (or 84.4 per cent) undertook work experience. In the metropolitan area, 45 of the 49 schools responding operated work experience programmes, while 63 out of 79 rural secondary schools conducted such programmes. The responses are shown in Table 1.

Of the respondents, only one metropolitan senior high school and three of the six metropolitan high schools did not offer work experience. The latter figure may be a consequence of high schools not always having the services of a YEO or full-time GO. The results from rural schools may confirm this view, because participation rates are again highest where the school is a senior high school. The lowest participation rates are in the Class II district high schools, which have difficulties such as finding placements in small towns and having more students who live out of town, as well as not having staff with full-time responsibility for the work experience programme. Despite these issues, the overall level of school participation is very high.

1. Work Experience Programmes - A guide for teachers.
Education Department of W.A., 1977.

TABLE 1. SCHOOL TYPE AND PARTICIPATION IN WORK EXPERIENCE
(N = 128)

SCHOOL ¹ TYPE	METROPOLITAN		RURAL		TOTAL	
	Nos. Replies with WE		Nos. Replies with WE		Nos. Replies with WE	
SHS	43	42	22	20	65	62
HS	6	3	4	4	10	7
DHS I ²	0	0	23	18	23	18
DHS II ²	0	0	30	21	30	21
	49	45	79	63	128	108

Table 2 shows the numbers of students participating in work experience by year levels, sex, school type and school location. Year 10 students were the group most commonly involved in work experience. This corresponds to the emphasis placed on careers activities for those students (see Table 3). Some 75.2 per cent of students who participated in work experience in 1979 were Year 10s, and 22.2 per cent were Year 11 students. Boys outnumbered girls among the Year 10 participants, but there were more females than males among Year 11 participants. Perhaps this latter situation reflects the large number of business education students (generally female) from Year 11 who participate in work experience.

Overall, 8 686 students from Government secondary schools participated in work experience in 1979, representing 18.2 per cent of the total enrolled in Years 9 to 12 in those schools. These figures indicate the rapid increase in numbers since, 1976, when 1 650 students were placed on work experience by YEOs. The statistics also show quite clearly the lack of participation by Year 12 (1.9 per cent of the total) and Year 9 students (2.7 per cent of the total).

Rural and urban differences in participation rates are quite marked. There were 33 854 students in Years 9 to 12 in metropolitan schools, of whom 4 950 (or 14.6 per cent) participated in work experience. Of the 13 757 rural

1. SHS - senior high school, HS - high school, DHS I - district high school Class I, DHS II - district high school Class II.
2. District high schools are all located in rural areas.

students in the same years, 3 736 (or 27.2 per cent) were able to participate. These figures indicate the extent to which work experience has penetrated rural areas and show that, in this regard, being a rural student is an advantage.

TABLE 2. STUDENT PARTICIPATION NUMBERS BY YEAR LEVELS, SEX AND SCHOOL TYPE

SCHOOL TYPE	Year	9		10		11		12		TOTAL
	Sex	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
METRO(M)										
SHS		37	26	1783	1552	525	809	26	34	4792
HS		0	0	83	75	0	0	0	0	158
SUB TOTAL(M)										
	N	37	26	1866	1627	525	809	26	34	4950
	%	0.4	0.3	21.5	18.7	6.0	9.3	0.3	0.4	57.0
RURAL(R)										
SHS		9	5	1045	886	208	331	3	9	2496
HS		1	0	188	130	0	0	3	0	322
DH I		12	4	222	197	20	24	0	0	479
DH II		30	29	179	187	1	13	0	0	439
SUB TOTAL(R)										
	N	52	38	1634	1400	229	368	6	9	3736
	%	0.6	0.4	18.8	16.1	2.6	4.2	0.07	0.1	43.0
TOTAL(M & R)										
	N	89	64	3500	3027	754	1177	32	43	8686
	%	1.0	0.7	40.4	34.8	8.7	13.7	0.4	1.5	100.0

Twenty schools indicated that they did not operate a work experience programme, and listed some of the reasons for this. Of these schools, 18 felt they would have great difficulty finding enough placements for students within the community. As many of these were rural schools, (generally district high schools), this was not surprising, because placement opportunities are often limited in such communities. The time required to operate a programme was cited as a problem by 15 schools. There were seven schools who took this matter further, explaining that they had no staff members who would receive time consideration if they were to establish and operate work experience.

Several schools referred to parental opposition as a reason for not establishing a programme. They said parents would consider work experience to infringe on important school time. However, as section 5.3 shows, even though they did not offer work experience, many of these 20 schools listed important benefits to be gained from it.

(b) Work experience as a careers activity

Schools were asked to indicate, from a list provided, the types of career activities undertaken at each year level. Table 3 shows the responses received. The figures are of the number of schools and do not show the numbers of students involved.

For Year 8 students, careers activities tend to concentrate on more vicarious experiences such as career nights and visiting speakers, with the most popular being vocational films and tapes (25.9 per cent), which can be offered within the school. Only two schools offered work experience to Year 8 students.

TABLE 3. CAREER ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AT DIFFERENT YEAR LEVELS

ACTIVITIES	YEAR LEVELS				
	8	9	10	11	12
	N = 108		N = 68 N = 65		
Visits to CES Offices	10	25	96	43	28
Careers nights	13	19	33	24	19
Visiting speakers	17	30	77	51	41
Films/tapes	28	45	81	43	34
Careers Course	10	24	65	13	4
Simulated work situations	5	6	21	22	3
Job observation	8	10	47	29	3
Work experience	2	15	98	58	9
Factory visits	12	22	53	21	7
Career exploration	11	30	71	28	14
Job-seeking skills	8	22	69	28	10

A similar pattern of activities emerged for Year 9 students, although increased activity in the areas of careers exploration, formal career education courses and job-seeking skills seemed evident. Students have more contact with the community than at the Year 8 level, with more factory visits and work experience. In the case study schools some Year 9 students participated in work experience - mainly students having special difficulties at school. One case study school had initiated a pilot programme of placing Year 9 students and hoped this would be the future pattern. It was considered this would give students more time to develop their interests and alter their educational goals if necessary.

Most careers activity focused on Year 10, with work experience being extremely popular (98 out of 108 schools). Apparently this concentration results from the expectation that many students will decide at the completion of Year 10 to leave school and join the workforce.

Work experience is the most popular career activity for Year 11 students (58 out of 68 schools). The case study data suggest that these primarily involve students from alternative upper school courses or vocational business education courses. Less than half the schools with Year 11 classes offer careers exploration and job-seeking skills to Year 11 students. It appears the assumption is made that these students will benefit mainly from experiences within the community, as well as from the more traditional forms of community contact, such as visiting speakers.

Lack of contact with the community is the most obvious feature of career activities for Year 12 students. The case study data indicate that a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the academic programme for the student, and that while they may theoretically be allowed to participate, these students are not actively encouraged to do so. This matter is discussed in section 5.2

Two case studies yielded interesting information about how work experience was made an integral part of the career education programme. One school had included the careers activities in the school's pastoral care programme and called it transition education. During the first five weeks of Year 10, students participated in one hour per week of classes, operated by pastoral care teachers, focusing on career awareness and planning. Work experience was an integral part of this, extending into the workplace the learning of the classroom. A second case study school integrated the careers-work experience programme, using four 55-minute social studies periods in the week before and after students participated in work experience. In these sessions, students explored their levels of career awareness and their aptitudes at the same time as they prepared for work experience.

(c) The objectives of work experience

Objectives of the work experience programme taken from the guidelines to schools were discussed in Chapter 4. It was interesting to examine the extent to which the objectives of the schools correlated with those set down by the Department. Since each school could operate a number of work experience programmes, the objectives of their programmes could vary. Schools were given a list of the Departmental objectives and asked to note the degree of emphasis placed on each. Separate responses were to be expected for the different groups served and the results are shown in Table 4. In most cases the questionnaires would have been completed by YEOs. The guidelines were written from the experiences of a group of YEOs and are used regularly in YEO in-service courses. The YEOs could be reflecting their training and not their schools' philosophies. However, the study will have to assume that the responses reflect the schools' intentions.

Objectives for the general school programme appeared to be much the same as those objectives set down in the Departmental guidelines. The objectives given highest priority were 'general work preparation', 'career options' and 'occupational goals', rather than 'specific job preparation' and 'job placement'. These latter objectives are more important in the business education work experience programme where the job-training component has long been part of vocationally oriented courses. 'Job placements' was emphasized as an important objective for the general school programme (by 22 schools), business education (by 20 schools), and alternative upper school courses (by 12 schools) because it allowed the student and employer to be brought into contact. In view of the current economic circumstances, this emphasis is not surprising but it does fall outside the objectives in the guidelines. The alternative upper school courses' work experience programmes emphasized personal awareness as an objective, because work experience was considered to give these students a degree of personal confidence and self-awareness.

Only two of the schools surveyed indicated they operated special education classes within the high school environment. The objectives of work experience for these students emphasized the development of general living skills and personal development. This appears to be consistent with the clientele involved, where the workplace represents an environment in which students can learn to relate to a range of different individuals, and at the same time develop personal and living skills.

In all case studies the objectives for work experience were either very general or not stated. One stated objective from a case study school is typical of that group.

'To attempt to improve the level of preparation given to students for future employment and adjustment to working life in general.'

With only one exception the case study schools took the aims set down in the Departmental handbook¹ as their own. The exception was a district high school where the Careers Adviser had not emphasized specific career experience as an aim because this was difficult to achieve in a community with a limited range of employment. Only three of the case studies had considered the aims for work experience within the context of the whole school programme. It was significant that these had very active careers guidance-transition programmes and wide staff support for them.

1. See Work Experience Programmes - A guide for teachers. Education Department, 1977, p.7.

TABLE 4. AIMS OF WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES

AIMS	General School Prog. (N=108) ¹	Business Educ. (N=58) ¹	Alt. U.S.C. (N=43) ¹	Special Classes (N=2) ¹
<u>WORK PREPARATION:</u> Develop habits and attitudes useful for work in general.	45	26	19	2
<u>LIVING SKILLS:</u> Develop habits to help the student function independently on leaving school.	22	10	9	2
<u>PERSONAL AWARENESS:</u> Give students greater self-confidence and awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.	34	21	15	2
<u>EMPLOYER AWARENESS:</u> Promote employer awareness of the problems students face in transition; encourage an active role in the educative process.	12	10	9	0
<u>PARENT AWARENESS:</u> Involve parents in the educative process; develop parental confidence in their ability to guide their children's decisions.	8	6	3	0
<u>JOB TRAINING:</u> Develop marketable skills for particular jobs.	9	32	9	0
<u>JOB PLACEMENT:</u> Bring students into contact with employers; allow them to demonstrate their abilities and secure jobs.	22	20	12	1
<u>ATTITUDE:</u> Positive modifications in students' attitude to school.	21	12	2	2

1. These figures represent total numbers of responding schools which operate these work experience programmes.

TABLE 4. Continued

AIMS	General School Prog	Business Educ.	Alt. U.S.C.	Special Classes
<u>CAREER OPTIONS:</u> Increase knowledge of a number of career options, facts about particular jobs and working conditions.	43	22	8	0
<u>OCCUPATIONAL GOALS:</u> Decide on the educational goals which are relevant to the careers that interest them.	42	18	7	0

The other schools referred to the guideline's objectives with little apparent realization of the need to adapt these to what could be achieved. For example, only one school had a mechanism for involving parents to a greater extent than simply signing the permission slip, yet all acknowledged their commitment to the objective relating to parent involvement.

Both sources of data suggest that the most important objectives for general school programmes were extending career options and assisting with decision making about the educational goals relevant to careers. This latter objective seems difficult to fulfil, particularly with regard to the Year 10 early school-leaver. Although some of these students may find out through work experience that their Years 9 and 10 achievement levels are inappropriate for a particular career, by then it is probably too late to alter such levels.

A small number of schools (8 out of 108 offering a general school programme) emphasized parent awareness as an objective. However, a feature of most case study schools was that no mechanisms existed for the systematic involvement of parents in the work experience programme. Only two case study schools had attempted to include parents in a manner other than the routine signing of permission forms.

1. See Work Experience Programmes - A guide for teachers, Education Department, 1977, p.7.

The fact that schools do not place emphasis on parent involvement may not in itself be a problem; however, many schools indicated they followed the Departmental objectives, one of which is parental involvement. This may suggest that schools have given little thought to what are appropriate objectives for their own school programmes. There are instances where certain Departmental objectives may not be appropriate. For example, the objective concerning students trying out career choices may be inappropriate in a small country town where students simply do not have access to the range of careers which would be necessary to satisfy that objective. One rural case study school had realized this and deleted that objective from its programme.

The Departmental guidelines do encourage schools to set objectives which reflect their own circumstances. It is recognized, for example, that a school may choose to place a problem student in the workplace for the specific purpose of gauging his response in a different environment. This could be an appropriate use of work experience if it satisfies a particular school objective. Similarly, schools participating in the Rural-City Work Experience Scheme¹ may require slightly different objectives from those for a programme operating only in their home community. Such schools may have as an objective the appreciation by students of the complexities of the city workplace. In the same vein, where business education programmes utilize work experience for job-training purposes², this should feature in the objectives. All these examples suggest that objectives for work experience should be school specific.

Departmental guidelines suggest that work experience and its objectives should be part of school policy. Thoughtful consideration of the objectives by all school staff may be the best forum in which to decide what is most appropriate for their community, students and subject areas. Developing their objectives in these ways should enable schools to evaluate whether those objectives are being met.

1. See Appendix A.

2. Not a Departmental objective, but stated by a large number of schools that run work experience for business students.

(d) Programme description and types

Schools are free to operate whichever programme suits their students' and their community's needs. These needs will therefore condition the characteristics of a school's work experience programme. Table 5 indicates the popularity of placing students on work experience once a year for one week. Some 55 schools used this approach. This is supported by the case studies where the most popular programme type was one week each year. Also popular (31 responses) was the placement of students for a two-week period. Only one case study school used this method, but the practice was supported because two weeks gave students the opportunity to make a more realistic assessment of the workplace.

TABLE 5. PROGRAMME TYPES IN OPERATION IN SCHOOLS¹

Programme type	Metro	Rural	Total
1 x 1/2 day/week	4	5	9
2 x 1/2 day/week	1	8	9
1 day/week	8	1	9
2 days/week	1	0	1
1 week x 1/year	20	35	55
1 week x 2/year	11	12	23
1 week x 3/year	1	5	6
2 full weeks	16	15	31
> 3 weeks	9	3	12
	71	84	155

Day and half-day placements were one important difference between metropolitan and rural schools. For rural schools half-day placements may be easier to organize and may constitute a relatively large proportion of the employer's time if there are more smaller employers. A small number of rural schools also used a three-week placement for students.

1. Multiple responses possible.

A number of factors seem to explain the particular programme types that develop. These include

- Compromises between the competing needs of many aspects of the curriculum.
- The number of students to be placed at any one time.
- Varying perceptions of what is a desirable length of time.
- The length of time that various employers can profitably involve students.
- The varying needs of students.

Nine metropolitan and three rural schools indicated they offered work experience for longer than the Departmentally suggested periods (not greater than 20 days in any one year or more than 10 days in one session). This can easily occur if, as in one of the case studies, a class of students is placed for one day a week for the school year. In that school, work experience formed an important part of the Year 11 pre-vocation course and students worked in a range of apprenticeship areas with the local mining company. Although this exceeded the limit set by the Department, it was regarded as a valuable part of the educational programme offered to these students.

This situation presents a problem. Obviously the Department must set down desired lengths of time, otherwise the point that employers may use students as substitutes for paid employees could become a concern. Schools which feel strongly about a longer duration may need to consult with the responsible Education Department officer for any unusual arrangements to exist outside those established. While it may seem to some that such a procedure is unduly bureaucratic, it must be remembered that work experience programmes in Western Australia are able to operate free of a complicated legal framework only because of a negotiated understanding between the Education Department, employers and unions. This can be maintained only if the terms of agreement are adhered to by all parties and if cases which depart from them are examined.

(e) Time commitment

The questionnaire sought information about the time commitment of persons involved in work experience, but the question drew a poor response. Schools found time commitments difficult to estimate because of the intermittent nature of the programme. The responses (see Table 6) show that the major time commitment, and therefore responsibility, for work experience lies with the Youth Education Officers (YEOs). In 43 schools operating work experience these officers spent five hours or more each week

on this activity. Careers Advisers tend to spend between one and four hours per week on work experience - less time because in district high schools they deal with fewer students than the YEOs who work in senior high and high schools. Community members (not the employing community), the deputy and/or principal, teaching staff and year masters generally have less time committed to work experience. Some schools indicated that office staff have some involvement, but the response to this question was poor, so it is difficult to know the extent of such involvement. This response may be partly explained by the fact that, where YEOs are employed, schools are allocated an office worker, one-fifth time, for accompanying administrative work.

TABLE 6. RESPONSIBILITY AND TIME COMMITMENT OF PERSONS INVOLVED IN WORK EXPERIENCE

Persons involved	Hours per week spent organizing work experience				No Response
	<1hr/wk f	1-4hrs/wk f	5-10hrs/wk f	>10hrs/wk f	
YEO (71) ¹	2	5	20	23	21
GO (69) ¹	12	2	5	3	47
CA (51) ¹	2	16	8	1	29
Year Master	12	1	1	0	-
Teaching Staff	17	4	3	0	-
Principal/deputy	24	6	1	0	-
Community	14	3	0	0	-
Alt. U.S.C.(43) ¹	4	8	6	1	-
Parents	4	3	0	0	-
Office Staff	15	17	0	2	-

The time required to operate a work experience programme is significant and was an important factor in schools where no programme was established. This was especially important when no special personnel, such as a YEO or Careers Adviser, were available within the school (mostly district high schools). However, as the survey found, it is difficult to estimate the amount of time spent on work experience, due to the intermittent nature of the programme. A different way of estimating the time involved is to look at it in relation to the numbers of students placed. For larger schools, commonly placing 200 or 300 students, the time involved in preparation, on-site monitoring and evaluation (if one assumes all are done according to the guidelines) will be considered.

1. Total numbers of these staff at the secondary school level.

Careers Advisers are placing, on average, 20 students each year. The range is from four to 62. The Careers Adviser is allocated between four and six periods per week for career guidance and counselling within the school. The majority of Careers Advisers indicated that a time between one and 10 hours per week was committed to work experience. On all careers work they were able to spend between two and three and a half hours per week. Some concern has been expressed that Careers Advisers might spend so much time on work experience that little time would be available for other careers activities. It appears that the time Careers Advisers spend organizing work experience could be to the detriment of other careers activities, but the case studies suggested that a lot of the work experience effort is done outside school hours.

Case study schools indicated that a great deal of time on work experience was taken up in associated administrative work. This is also difficult to limit, for the effectiveness of work experience relies on different inputs - such as students stating preferences; parental permission; employer reports; student evaluations; and Departmental insurance notification. It seems essential that the paperwork involved in administering the programme is kept to a minimum. One approach could be to use a working document where the introductory notes, permission forms and evaluation criteria, facsimiles of which are in the guidelines, are all recorded in the one folder. Such a document could be well laid out, compact, attractive and easy to handle, particularly by those operating the programme. This would save considerable time. Time could also be reduced significantly for the one or two individuals operating work experience, if other staff assisted with the programme. However, the survey and the case studies suggest that this is not occurring to any significant extent.

5.2 Operating work experience programmes

Schools were asked to indicate the types of activities undertaken during the preparation, placement and evaluation of students' phases of work experience. The responses, with comments from the case studies, are described below.

(a) Preparation

It is expected that each student will receive some preparation for the work experience from appropriate individuals. A minimum level might simply be to acknowledge the student's choice and send home a form for parental consent.

Many schools (77 per cent) indicated that students gave their career preferences as their work experience preference and this was followed up by counselling staff who matched students with employers. Case study data suggested that counselling was not always an integral part of the placement procedure - it often depended upon the student concerned. Schools indicated that students' preferences for work experience followed very traditional sex-stereotyped lines. Male students tended to select the trades areas and females the para-professional occupations (typically nurse, teaching aide, veterinary assistant), or the sales-clerical area.

Schools rarely used only one method of finding placements. Approximately 15 per cent of schools allowed some students to find their own placement. Certain schools considered this to be a successful feature of their work experience programmes, even though it can cause problems. This matter is discussed in more detail in the next section.

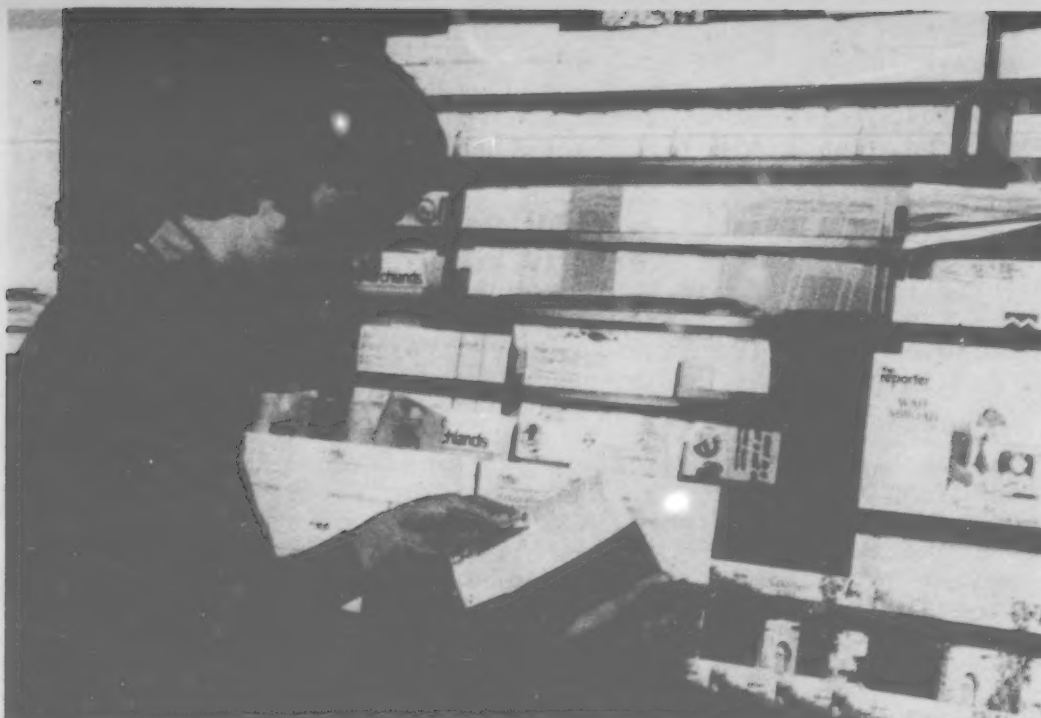
Approximately 26 per cent of schools also used the help offered by service clubs such as Rotary and Lions to gain placements for students, and to assist with preparing students for the workplace. Examples of this assistance included preparatory interviews and careers talks. Interviewing of students by employers of students was also a common preparatory activity in 17 per cent of schools.

Involvement of school staff in the planning and preparation of work experience was noted by 49 per cent of schools. Considering the data on actual time commitment of staff, this contact appears to be only of an incidental nature.

As part of the preparation phase, one case study school required all subject area teachers to confirm that students were clear of study commitments before they were allowed on work experience. This, it was felt, motivated students in their school work and encouraged students to see work experience as a privilege to be earned.

In all case studies some contact was made with the student just before placement, to check on last-minute details and to discuss issues such as transport, dress, personal behaviour, and any assessment of the workplace that might be expected of the student.

In 1980, a large amount of preparation material, including diaries and information for teachers responsible for work experience, was distributed to schools. Teachers all over the State were given in-service on its use.



Photograph 3: Student searching career information material for ideas for work experience



Photograph 4: Student discussing choice with work experience co-ordinator

(b) Student placements

Schools were asked which students were given preference for participation in work experience. Year 10 early school-leavers were the most preferred group (from 84.2 per cent of schools), followed by Years 10 and 11 business students (29.6 per cent) and Year 11 alternative students (28.7 per cent). Almost 20 per cent of schools placed priority on students who had learning or social difficulties. Other schools may not have distinguished this group from their Year 11 group or their Year 10 early school-leaver group, but it is significant that groups with these characteristics were identified. It suggests that schools believe such students benefit considerably from participation in work experience.

Asked about the major characteristics of students involved in work experience, 38.9 per cent of schools indicated that the programme was oriented toward low academic achievers, while 43.5 per cent of schools said the students tended to come from a wide range of achievement levels. A further 17.6 per cent of schools felt that average academic achievement was the chief characteristic of the majority of students involved.

This emphasis on the Year 10 early school-leavers and low academic achievers is understandable, since these students are considered to have the greatest difficulty moving from school to work. However, whether Years 11 and 12 students do not experience the same degree of difficulty moving from school into the workplace or tertiary education is an issue that could be raised. None of the available evidence says they find the transition any easier than early leavers. If schools suggest they are responding to the needs of students in transition, then they may need to review the basis on which priority for work experience is given.

The survey also sought to determine how much access students have to the programme. Only one school allowed some Year 8 students to participate in work experience, and only one school offered work experience to all Year 9 students. Table 7 summarizes the responses.

TABLE 7. OPENNESS OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES TO STUDENTS

Students	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12
	Number of Schools				
All students	0	1	76	13	5
Some students	1	23	25	46	13
No students	107	84	7	9	47
Totals	108	108	108	68	65

Again, the emphasis is on Year 10 students, There were 76 schools offering work experience to all Year 10s, and a further 25 schools offering it to some Year 10 students. Work experience was offered to all Year 11 students in only 13 schools, while 46 schools made work experience available to some Year 11 students. In schools which enrolled Year 12 students and offered work experience, 47 gave no Year 12 students the opportunity to participate. This reinforces a point made earlier, that work experience appears to have been interpreted as primarily an activity for Year 10 students and those in Year 11 alternative and business courses.

These findings are reinforced by the case study data. Only one school offered work experience to selected groups from Years 9 to 12. Participation by mainstream Years 11 and 12 students occurred only on rare occasions. In one school where this did occur, some pressure was placed upon the students not to participate, or, to do so during the holidays. Said Helen, a Year 12 student:

There was a lot of pressure not to miss out on school subjects ... they said you have to get the work done and it was up to me.

One problem with placing students during holidays is the lack of follow-up or monitoring which may occur because staff members are not available. This makes it more difficult for work experience undertaken in these circumstances to achieve the objectives stated for it.

One in three metropolitan schools offered work experience to some Year 9 students. For rural schools the corresponding proportion was one in 10. A difference was also noted in relation to work experience offered to Year 10 students. While 57 per cent of metropolitan schools offered work experience to all Year 10s, the corresponding figure for rural schools was 63 per cent. Although the difference is not great, the direction tends to suggest that rural schools concentrate their efforts on the placement of as many Year 10 students as possible. This may reflect the restricted placement opportunities in rural areas. Alternatively, metropolitan schools may find that placing all their Year 10 students is an impossible administrative task.

Very few schools offer more than one work experience to students, and usually only to Year 10 students (12.0 per cent of schools gave an additional opportunity to all Year 10s, and 43.5 per cent of schools offered a second placement to some). This circumstance also applies at the Year 11 level, where 12 per cent of schools offer more than one work experience to all Year 11s and 24 per cent to some.

Asked which students were difficult to place, 26.9 per cent of schools named those with learning, physical or social problems. This meant students had to be carefully selected and placed in a work environment which enhanced the students' abilities and encouraged personal development, rather than one which could create problems. The responses are summarized in Table 8.

TABLE 8. STUDENTS WHO PRESENT PLACEMENT PROBLEMS

Students who present placement problems ¹ (N = 108)		
	N	%
Students with learning/physical/social problems	29	26.9
Students looking for professional careers	5	4.6
Female students	11	10.2
Aboriginals	13	12.0
Students looking for W.E. in high-demand occupations	12	11.1
Undecided students	7	6.4
Isolated students	10	9.3

A number of rural schools (10) found that students who lived some distance from employers were difficult to place. These students had to find accommodation in town, use the school bus, or make some other arrangement regarding transport.

Other important problems were the difficulties presented by Aboriginal and female students. In one sense, reluctance by employers to accept Aboriginal students may be a reflection of wider community attitudes. The case studies, however, showed that some Aboriginal students were placed successfully and later offered employment by those employers. The placement of females represented a problem, particularly in smaller rural towns. The reason commonly given was the lack of suitable female occupations within the community.

1. Multiple responses possible

Other difficulties pointed out by schools were students seeking employment in areas which were already in high demand (11.1 per cent), students who had not really decided what sort of work experience they would like (6.4 per cent), and students seeking professional placements (4.6 per cent). As well as meeting these problems, schools need to place students in work situations where they feel both secure and happy.

Insufficient places for the number wanting to participate was a common problem. However, in the case studies, the rural schools were less likely to consider this a problem. Tremendous support from the employers who had actively campaigned for the programmes was cited as a major reason for their success. However, the one case study school which had most difficulty finding places was a rural school which had little employer support.

Many survey schools said they had made a deliberate decision to focus on a particular group of students because placements were limited. The focus was usually on Year 10 early school-leavers and students who had special learning problems, especially those seeking industrial or trades work. Students with professional interests often found it impossible to obtain suitable placements. As the next chapter and Appendix A will show, a major advantage of the Rural-City Work Experience Scheme was that it provided placement opportunities unavailable locally to rural schools.

A problem for metropolitan schools was that many schools competed for the limited placement opportunities. As almost all metropolitan high schools conduct a work experience programme, large numbers of students are involved, and the problem is compounded by some schools wanting to place all of the students from a particular year level.

Another problem for metropolitan and rural schools is related to the employment profiles of their communities. Some metropolitan schools are in primarily residential areas for example Applecross, Churchlands and Hollywood. Others are in primarily light industrial areas such as Kewdale and Cannington. Where students need placements which necessitate movement out of the immediate community, accusations of 'poaching' can come from other schools. Obviously the type of community in which schools are located does present placement problems for particular students. For rural schools, too, the employment profile is important because it varies according to the economic base (e.g. mining, agriculture) and the size of the community.

To overcome this, schools may have to operate on a regional basis and to pool their resources. In this way schools restricted by the type of community in which they are located will then be able to offer students placements of a greater variety. It is also through a regional link that a mechanism can be established to co-ordinate the placements for several schools.

A growing commitment to work experience in technical colleges and private schools has also placed pressure on the available places. This was a serious concern in a number of schools, and also explains why many schools, particularly metropolitan ones, have tended to focus on particular groups of students.

The means by which schools actually find placements for students also emerged as a matter of concern. The majority of schools (85 per cent) indicated that the school arranged the placement of the student, but in the remainder students sought their own placements by approaching employers with a letter of introduction from the school. This approach was regarded by some survey schools as a successful feature of the programme, because it gave students a more realistic impression of what it was like to search for a job. Despite this, the approach presents problems. The main one is that often a number of students approach the one employer, seeking a placement. These multiple approaches are viewed by employers as time-consuming and frustrating. Employers suggested that approaches should be made by the school and not the student. Students will sometimes seek out employers they know, or employers they have heard will provide a payment to students for the period of work experience. It is also pertinent that when the school seeks the placement, an opportunity exists for employer and school representatives to meet, for the scheme to be explained thoroughly, and for the place of employment to be appraised fully.

The problems schools face in organizing placements seem to put the onus on the school to make the contact with the employers and to prepare their students fully for the experience. The extent to which this responsibility can be devolved to employers, to parents and to students seems to be limited. Reflecting this, schools have recently been advised officially not to have students find their own placements.

(c) Participation

Participation refers to the time when the student is actually involved in activities at the workplace. Sometimes the student reaches this stage without the aid of questions intended to direct experiences, but at other times students will be well prepared, with their experiences well thought out and monitored during the placement. Approximately 66 per cent of schools gave students questions to act as guidelines for the experience, as well as an opportunity to evaluate that experience.

All case study schools provided an employer with an evaluation sheet to assess students. These were to be returned, either by post or with the student, and could in some instances be used by the student as a reference. Response rates were good. This practice may need further thought in view of concerns expressed by certain employers. For example, one employer noted that, in his small town, he was not able to be honest about a particular student's performance, for it could engender bad feeling should his comments be made known publicly. Another employer felt that any assessment of a student's performance which was negative might be an unfair one, because a variety of incidental factors might result in the student being turned off a potential career area. As a consequence, he said, comments made were not always honest. Secondly, he suggested one week was hardly long enough in which to make any worthwhile assessment.

Some employers noted that they were not always certain what was expected of them regarding supervision, payment of students and evaluation. For example, some employers were unclear whether to give the students a range of tasks or to treat them as first year apprentices with a set of fairly basic tasks to undertake. The following comments highlight the range of approaches:

... I try to get students to participate in a range of jobs from the old people to the babies to the radiographer's job ... most (students) don't realize that working in a hospital can mean a variety of occupational roles.

Matron of a hospital

... We give the students a range of tasks so that they get the feel of working in all areas of radio. We let them read the news. On the last day I sit down with the student and discuss the weeks' work and their career opportunities.

Manager, Radio station

We don't give students a range of experiences, for we feel that students should engage in the more mundane activities they are likely to encounter in their first year at work.

Training officer, mining company

Echoing the view of some employers, students were unanimous in their desire for a placement longer than one week. Said one student,

Five days is not long enough. By the end of the week you are just getting used to it and falling into place.

Donnell, Year 10

Employers' comments varied from several who suggested one week was long enough, as it would take up too much of the employer's time, to those who felt that one month of work experience was too short! Such employers were, however, more concerned with teaching students particular job skills in depth.¹ Most felt that two weeks would enable the student, to overcome their initial awkwardness, and allow them to experience fully the work environment. Schools reported that going back to work after a week-end was a valuable experience for students.

The diversity of programme types was also evident in case study schools. In school one, students from a pre-vocational course were placed for one day per week for the full year with the mining company. Students were moved through different parts of the workplace in order to gather a range of skills. In another school, some students participated in a half-day per week for the term, and then altered the place of work experience. Some schools suggested that they try to respond to the needs of the employer, of the student and, in some instances, of other schools and their placement requirements. Consequently, individual programmes are worked out for students on this basis.

1. This is not really consistent with the objectives of the school programme, which aims at giving a series of brief impressions of the workplace.



Photograph 5: The work experience co-ordinator visits the workplace to check student progress with the employer



Photograph 6: Students discuss work experience on their return to school

During the work experience period, contact was maintained, usually by counselling staff and in particular the YEO or Careers Adviser. Some 42 per cent of schools noted that the staff assisted in maintaining contact but, given comments made earlier about their time commitments, the extent of that involvement could warrant closer examination. Only one or two staff may be involved and data presented earlier indicate that it is usually for less than one hour per week. In 9 per cent of schools, parents also were involved at this stage, either by maintaining contact or through assisting with transport.

In the case study schools, the contact was sometimes by telephone, not always by direct personal contact by the school staff or co-ordinator. Case study schools stressed that while this was time-consuming, it was also essential. Students stated they looked forward to seeing someone from the school and employers said they enjoyed an opportunity to discuss each student's progress. From the school's point of view, it was considered critical to maintain contact to iron out difficulties which might have arisen, and to let the employer see he was not being used as a 'baby-sitter' for the school. Students also said it was easier to discuss the workplace with staff who knew the physical environment that the student had experienced. Schools were not always able to maintain on-site contact because insufficient time was available, and sometimes the placement of students conflicted with the YEO being away on camps or other school activities.

(d) Evaluation

Effective follow-up activities for what is, for many students at least, quite a new experience seem crucial to the success of the work experience programme. Most schools (87 per cent) indicated informal post-placement contact, where the student interacted briefly with staff in reviewing the experience. However, only 43 per cent of schools reported more thoroughly and systematically working through the students' and employers' observation and evaluation sheets. How much time these schools spent in that exercise is unknown.

In about half the schools some school staff did follow up the students' experiences. Again the extent of follow-up is difficult to determine from the survey data. It is pertinent to note that much of the student-staff contact tended to be of an informal nature, rather than through planned activities in different subject areas. Rarely did the work experience programme influence the curriculum in any major way. Only five schools stated that the English area had made major modifications, six reported the optional areas had made major adjustments, and two schools reported

modifications in the social studies area. Schools reported minor adjustments to their curricula as more common, though, particularly in the English (54 schools), social studies (61 schools) and the option (58) areas. Very little modification seems to have been made in mathematics and science. Work experience programmes seem to have more direct application to the social science areas than to the science areas of our secondary schools.

Other activities which occurred in the follow-up phase included local media coverage (5 per cent of schools); the sending of 'thank you' notes to employers (39.8 per cent); written student reports (22 per cent); and interviews with parents (8.3 per cent). Some schools (8.3 per cent) noted that specific follow-up was often initiated by employers, where jobs were offered, references were given or interest was expressed in supporting the scheme again.

Follow-up or evaluation work was not a strong feature of work experience programmes in the case studies. The most common practice was for the student to meet informally with the YEO or Careers Adviser to discuss his or her experiences. The two would then go through the employer's evaluation sheet (if returned) and the student questionnaire (if set as a task). Discussion with other staff members seems to have been mostly incidental, rarely planned or systematic.

Only two of the seven case study schools had formalized follow-up programmes when the student had returned to school. These took the form of classroom discussions, group activities, written reports, discussions with counselling staff, and remedial work if employer evaluations indicated this was desirable. In one of these schools, the Careers Adviser was also the Deputy Principal, so it was relatively easy to organize contact after work experience. In another school, the work experience programme had been operated by the same YEO for a number of years. Consequently, with time, adequate coverage was being provided in all phases of the programme. In three schools the business education co-ordinators paid particular attention to their own students and developed a range of follow-up activities which would serve to enrich the students' work experiences.

5.3 The benefits of work experience

What value does work experience have? What worth do students, teachers, employers and counselling staff see in it? Responses to these questions were sought in both the survey and the case studies.

(a) The school perspective

In the survey, three main categories of response were received from schools about what they saw as the values of work experience. These categories were

- Career information and goal crystallization.
- Self-development and personal awareness.
- Awareness of world of work, and what it entails.

These statements were consistent with those given as the main objectives for work experience for mainstream students (see previous section).

As was described in the section on objectives for work experience, a number of schools considered placing the student in contact with the employer to be an important objective, one which might result in a job offer for the student. It is interesting, therefore, that for 19.4 per cent of schools, job offers and employment opportunities were an important benefit, while 12 per cent of schools suggested the gaining of particular job skills which would assist students in getting a job was a benefit. A further benefit noted by 20 per cent of schools was the positive change in attitude by students to school. It was stated that these students were, as a consequence of work experience and their career plans, more receptive to learning and could see the value of subjects undertaken in school.

Schools were also asked to list other benefits they would like to see resulting from work experience. These are shown in Table 9. The most common responses were those dealing with greater staff, school and student awareness of the employing community. Schools were seen as insular places which could learn much from greater participation in community activities. Important improvements in work experience listed by schools were an expansion of work experience to several weeks (30 per cent of schools) and better integration of work experience into the school curriculum (26 per cent).

Closely related to the perceived benefits of work experience were the features of their work experience programmes which schools felt to be most successful. Many schools (42.5 per cent) suggested their most successful feature was the development of good school-community relationships. The case study data indicated that teachers had varying perceptions of the value of work experience; however, most supported the ideas the programme embodied. Teachers who had close association with the programme at the school level were generally supportive. Some teachers noted that students appeared more motivated and in most cases the experience appeared to be a valuable one. Others were unsure of the value of the programme for all students, though they expressed a belief in its value for lower ability students.

TABLE 9. OTHER POSSIBLE BENEFITS FROM WORK EXPERIENCE

Other benefits from work experience	N = 108	
	f	%
Greater staff-school awareness of employing community	66	61.1
Better student awareness of work world	62	57.4
Greater employer awareness of school and student needs and work experience	32	29.6
Better integration of work experience in schools	28	25.9
More employment opportunities for youths	16	14.8

Some other responses indicated that work experience could be a way of involving parents in the school and could develop more specific job skills in some students. Other schools hoped involvement in work experience programmes would eventually produce more effective Education Department guidelines.

It appeared that the degree of active support by teaching staff was usually consistent with how well the programme was organized within the school. As can be appreciated, there is some difficulty in distinguishing whether one factor is a prerequisite for the other. It is suggested, however, that most probably each reinforces the other.

For some teachers, work experience represented an unnecessary intrusion into valuable school time. Others felt the promotion of programmes such as work experience only reinforced the work ethic, which they considered an unwise position to take in view of the projected employment patterns. Still others accepted that schools are expected to reflect the values of society, and only a brave person would argue that work is not one of those values.

What future employment uncertainties may really mean is that schools need to pass on to students skills which allow them to be flexible in a changing job market. It is for this reason that an argument can be developed for the establishment of objectives and procedures which encourage and develop general work skills and attitudes rather than more narrow vocationally oriented ones.

Almost 25 per cent of schools responding suggested that work experience was successful because it encouraged both better career preparation and student orientation to work. Other features rated successful included students finding their own placements (15 per cent), openness of the programme to a large number of students (15.7 per cent) and good school level of participation, preparation and evaluation (13.9 per cent).

Regardless of the variety in their programmes, schools appear to have recognized that they are not complete learning environments, and that for the development of community and workplace skills experience in the workforce is valuable. One work experience co-ordinator summed up this feeling, saying 'the best way for students to develop an understanding of the community is to participate in that community'.

(b) The student perspective

Interviews with students from the case study schools provided a range of interesting comments with regard to the value they perceive work experience to have. Students stated there was a difference between finding out about a career from books and discovering what really went on in the workplace. Careers and work are not only about the tasks set but the social dynamics of various workplaces as well. These very important dimensions are difficult to translate into texts. When asked what they had gained from work experience, students gave a variety of answers. Many related the experience in a personal, self-developmental way.

Yes, it taught me a lot about myself, work and other people.

Alan, regional nursery office

It taught me to cope with other people when working and how to cope with their moods and mine.

Kerrie Ann, MMA general hand

You need to be careful with other people and what you say. Being on work experience helped me see what it's like working and being able to accept some responsibility.

Shirley, health surveying

I found out that I can be very persuasive and that I can be liked by many new people within so few days.

Kevin, primary teaching

I enjoyed the work experience for it was feeling that it was what I wanted to do ... and knowing that I was getting on with the vet.

Helen, veterinary nursing



Photograph 7: Work experience as a veterinary nurse

Other students valued work experience for the part it played in their decision making.

I think it was one thing I was so glad I did. Until then I could never imagine myself behind a desk, doing paperwork. I could now, and thoroughly enjoyed it. I couldn't be a secretary if it were just typing letters, and that is what I imagined the person would do. But really there are all sorts of things to do. It was then that I started to think about other things rather than physiotherapy.

Sara, secretarial work

The work experience gave me everything I had to know to become a fitter and turner. I think I would rather stay at work than come back to school.

Peter, fitting and turning

I would not like that particular job, but I would like to cater.

Jacque, snack servery



Photograph 8: Work experience on a building site

One student found she didn't enjoy the job as she had thought she would.

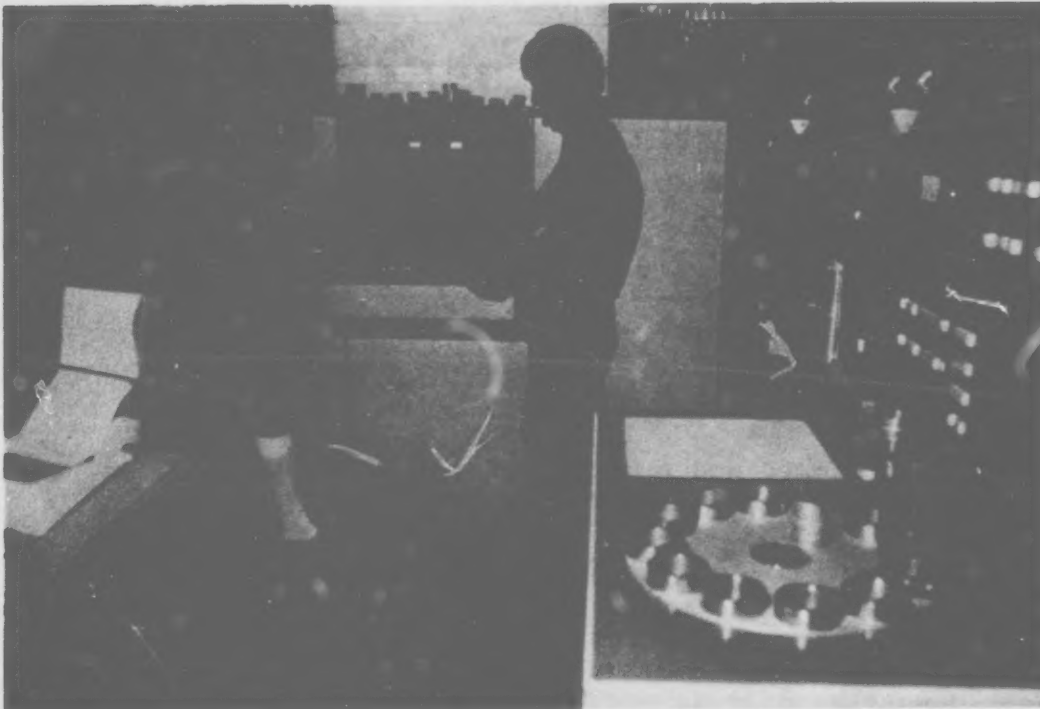
I'm the type who needs to have something to do all day and all the time - I couldn't just do that for two years. I was going to leave at the end of Year 11, but have decided to go on to the end of Year 12.

Karin, hairdressing

For one student it was the possibility of a job.

The valuable thing for me was getting to know the employer so you might have a chance of getting a job. My employer said 'I'll get in touch with you if I need an apprentice.

Cathy, auto-electrician



Photograph 9: Work experience in a meteorological office

For other students, the realities of the workplace were made very clear. One student, who worked as a nurse on night shift at the hospital, stated

I enjoyed it all, apart from working too many late nights.

Julie, nursing

Some students, then, learned things about the workplace and their interaction with it which were specific to them - things it would be impossible to teach. Working late shifts encouraged one student to consider a whole different dimension of working-time. For that particular student, reality was not pleasant.

Other students learned the intangible dimensions of the workplace. For example, Tracy worked as a teacher aide and her comment was

I liked the creativeness of the job, the people, the atmosphere, the children.

She no longer identified a general reason for choosing (because she wanted to work with children), but was able to identify other characteristics of the workplace and qualities within herself which were important.

Students did feel nervous about the notion of going out to work. As students' comments indicate, the common feature was the lack of knowing what to expect

I felt scared about the way I was dressed and about the fact I wouldn't know what to do. What if they didn't tell me what to do, or if I'm going to stand there like a stuffed idiot?

Nigel, mechanic

I felt scared about not knowing how they would treat me.

Karin, hairdressing

I felt scared about not knowing the people and how they would treat you and not knowing what to expect.

Shane, catering

Some rural students, particularly from the district high school, noted that in a smaller country town where everyone was known there was no need to be nervous. However, the prospect of perhaps having to work in the city was a daunting one. Said one student

(I) wouldn't really like it up there for I wouldn't really like the city. I don't really know people up there.

Aaron, general labouring

Many students extolled the virtues of work experience, as opposed to formal school lessons.

You meet different people and learn to interact.

Karen, secretarial work

You are treated like an adult and operate on the same basis. It's good.

Trisha, teaching assistant

It was such a different environment. You were doing different things, and things you wanted to do. As well, the level of responsibility was different between school and work.

Scott, clerical work

You had some responsibility ... it was not so much knowing what the job is about, but knowing what you are faced with. Going from school into the workforce is a big change ... you are independent then ...

Sara, secretarial work

Not all students had positive work experiences. One student worked with a photographer because of his interest in the field. However, he stated he found the experience most unsatisfactory, for the photographer only allowed him to serve at the counter. Several others disliked the lack of work given and the general level of laziness of the workers. They stated they felt 'very bored'.

To overcome problems associated with boredom may require a better understanding between the employer and school coordinator concerning the school's requirements. One of these is that students should be taken on only when the level of activity at the workplace is sufficient to support a student engaging in activities, not simply watching. Bored students can be potential behaviour problems. This type of problem can be checked if adequate monitoring and evaluation occur. Although not encountered in this study, instances have been recorded of employers abusing students, an unsatisfactory experience for the student. Again, to avoid this type of occurrence, adequate monitoring and evaluation is required when students are involved in work experience.

(c) The employer perspective

Most employers indicated strong support for work experience programmes. They suggested this gave students an opportunity to gain experiences in what they termed 'the real world'. It was also stated that students should be given as much assistance as possible because it was critical that their decisions be correct ones, particularly in a time of high unemployment.

Not all the benefits accrue to the students only, as several incidents illustrate. One student was placed with a drafting firm, and spent several days showing the employer a new drawing technique learned in school, which could appropriately be used in the workplace. In this situation the employer felt the business had gained more than the student. Another business had previously not employed office staff. When the student on work experience proved invaluable in what she was able to show the employer, a position was created. The extent of these occurrences is not known; however, they are examples of the rewards work experience programmes can produce for students, schools and employers.

A sense of community responsibility was an important reason employers gave for participating in work experience. This was very noticeable in the more isolated communities, where the school-community links tended to be much closer. Approaches to the school to participate in the programme were often initiated by employers and special arrangements were worked out for students with special needs. Some employers noted this gave them an opportunity to assess students as potential employees. The attitude of many employers was to assume the placement to be a career experience for the student and to assess the students on that basis.

Several employers, though acknowledging the value of work experience, felt that alternative methods might be explored to achieve the same ends. They suggested that job visits, films and community activities might be cheaper and less time-consuming alternatives. This type of comment, though rare, was based upon a particular need to co-ordinate efforts to reduce pressure on employers. It was made by two big employers who had been approached on numerous occasions to take students. As more students participate in work experience the need for co-ordination with employers will presumably grow.

(d) The parents' perspective

Only one case study school had tried to determine what parents thought of the programme after their children had participated. Although only a small number of parents responded, the reactions do give an idea of parental feeling. Generally they endorsed the programme, and claimed it provided a stimulus for discussion of the student's career. To the question of how they thought their child had benefited, the following type of response was common:

Bill knows he can't just cook, but a lot of preparing is required.

It has made Trevor realize the benefit of an apprenticeship.

Some parents did find there were certain costs involved (for example transport, safety boots, special clothing) and suggested that some means should be available to recoup these costs, such as students getting paid. Such a change might, however, upset the present agreements between the three major parties involved in work experience.

5.4 Summary

The survey and case study data reveal work experience to be a widespread, time-consuming, but generally valued activity in our secondary schools. These programmes have put schools in closer contact with their communities, have produced higher levels of motivation and achievement in some students and, in a smaller number of cases, have caused schools to think through the provisions they make for students to move from school to the world of work.

Work experience has some problems and some opponents. Several problems involve staffing the programmes and the amount of time they take to operate properly. Opponents of work experience commonly argue that it distracts effort from the 'proper' roles of schools and raises employment expectations that our economy may not be able to satisfy.

Work experience seems to be operating within a sound basic framework, principally that established by the Education Department's guidelines. However, the data reveal several difficulties and shortcomings schools face in translating the guidelines into action. Some of these centre on co-ordinating the activities of several schools, the special difficulties faced by rural schools, integrating the lessons of work experience into a transition education framework and into the school curriculum, and the continuing applicability of the guidelines. These issues are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

ISSUES IN WORK EXPERIENCE

The survey and case study data and the more informal discussions with relevant people all indicate that there are a number of issues related to work experience which merit examination. Several of these have already been alluded to in the previous chapter but they will be discussed here in greater detail. It should be borne in mind that the survey and case study data portray the characteristics of work experience programmes late in 1979 or early in 1980. During 1980 a number of developments occurred in work experience programmes, many of which were relevant to these issues. Accordingly, this chapter should be read in conjunction with Appendix A, which outlines some of these developments and places this report in the current framework within which work experience programmes operate.

The issues that will be discussed in this chapter include the need for schools to co-ordinate their work experience activities, the need to better integrate work experience into the general framework of both transition activities and normal curriculum, the structures needed and provided to support work experience, the problem of sex stereotyping in occupational choices, the special circumstances of rural schools and the relevance and practicality of the guidelines.

6.1 Co-ordination

The need for co-ordination of work experience programmes exists at two levels - within schools and between schools. Within-school co-operation means making the operation of the programme complement, and be complemented by, other activities within the school.

The survey data show that in most schools, one person usually takes the role of co-ordinator for work experience. One person having the responsibility was considered important because it identified an individual who would initiate and maintain the programme and be the link between the school and the community.

Discussions with some subject teachers revealed that they were not approached until the last minute regarding the placement of students on work experience. This interfered with work planned and was a cause for friction. As this section will show, the growing need for between-school co-ordination has encouraged planning and diminished these problems. To overcome this type of problem, one school, at the start of the year, established the programme as part of school policy, which gave a general indication of when classes of students would be absent. Before each class was placed, students received a release form requiring

signatures from all subject teachers concerned. This approach informed teachers which students were involved and encouraged the students to regard the experience as one to be worked for. In this school, teachers regarded work experience as a valuable part of the school programme. A second case study school operated career education and work experience through the pastoral care programme. This achieved co-ordination because it involved a number of teachers from the commencement of the school year. Teachers were then informed well in advance of the students being placed and were able to plan around that knowledge.

Between-school co-ordination essentially involved schools co-operating to balance the pressures on various employers. In the questionnaire, schools were asked whether liaisons occurred with other schools and for what reason. A number of schools (70.3 per cent) indicated that sometimes contact was made with other schools, while 7.4 per cent of schools noted this happened often. Schools considered this contact took place on a formal basis (42.5 per cent) or was intended to offer informal support (57.5 per cent). This suggests that schools have begun to form loose associations into which a more sophisticated co-ordination mechanism could be built if necessary. The lack of any systematic co-ordination, however, was portrayed in interviews as a cause of growing concern. This has been displayed in instances where certain employers were approached on numerous occasions by several schools or institutions to offer work experience placements.

Repeated requests for co-operation can produce frustration on the part of the employer who is placed in a position of having to refuse support on numerous occasions. By co-ordinating activities between schools, it may be possible to make approaches to the community more systematically and, as a team, to approach sectors of the employment market not as yet utilized in the work experience programme. This pooling of resources must ultimately be both more efficient and in the interests of the programme as a whole.

Several methods were used in case study schools to help overcome the co-ordination problem. One regional centre had formed a Work Experience Co-ordination Committee with representatives from all schools which operated a work experience programme in the community, including the technical school, Government schools, private schools and the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS).¹ At the time of study, the committee met only at the beginning of the year, to determine when the different institutions would place students so that they did not all converge on the employing community in the last weeks of terms one and two.

1. This scheme is operated by the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs for unemployed youths.

This method still resulted in schools and other involved parties making multiple approaches to the employing community. This was regarded as a problem area. For example, one major employer who was approached on numerous occasions to take students complained that he was being forced to say 'no' to the growing pressure to take more students. It must be remembered that if a firm decides to take on students, this can reduce the effective manpower available to that firm, for often a worker is required to supervise the students on almost a full-time basis.

Another region had developed a co-ordination mechanism through the Work Experience Committee of the local Manpower Planning Panel. The committee co-ordinated the work experience programme for the non-Government schools in the local community as well as for three neighbouring Government schools in outlying towns which placed students in the regional centre due to a lack of placements in their own communities. The local Government secondary school liaised with this committee informally so that each knew when various schools were placing students. Although a limited approach to co-ordination, this appeared to be effective.

Co-ordination has also become a crucial issue in urban areas, particularly since the rapid increase in numbers of students placed has imposed additional stress on the employing community. There is no doubt that the potential employer market has not been fully explored. However, what is needed is a systematic approach to the employing community and a mechanism for determining which employers are being approached constantly and when employers have reached saturation point.

To be fully effective, co-ordination should include all agencies in a particular locality which place students, and must have the co-operation of all those agencies. Although any co-ordination mechanisms are likely to be difficult both to establish and to operate, in view of the need to maintain good relations with the employing community and the likely growth in the numbers of students to be placed, this step is imperative. Recognizing the problems with co-ordination of programmes in different schools, in 1980 the Education Department appointed two work experience co-ordinators in Perth and six in country regions.

6.2 Integration

The survey and case study data suggest that work experience is often an isolated activity within schools. This may result from high schools being subject oriented. As work experience is seen to be a careers activity and most schools operate the programme for this specific purpose

only, teachers in many subject areas probably see little value for their areas in the work experience programme. The interviews revealed that while most teachers supported the work experience programme, they did not necessarily consider it necessary to ask 'What does work experience mean for my subject area?'

If, as the Departmental objectives for work experience imply, the intention is that subject teachers investigate how they can utilize the activities of the work experience programme, the programme would need to be promoted within the school in a different manner. To attain a greater degree of integration, work experience programmes would probably need to be reflected in school policy, where they are considered as one aspect of a comprehensive transition education programme. It might also require that the objectives of work experience be decided upon by school staff, and the potential of the programme be explored in the various subject areas. An attempt to do this was found in only one case study. It is acknowledged that this approach will not be easy; however, it seems crucial that it be encouraged if the world of work is to have any general impact on the operation of secondary schools.

Another factor which appears to influence the degree of integration that work experience attains is the attitude of the staff towards it. This attitude seems to be related to how long work experience has been operating in the school and how long the present staff have been involved with it. Where working relationships between teaching staff of subject areas have been established over several years, negotiations have occurred and a combining of resources has resulted. A programme which is new obviously requires time in order for it to be established, and new staff require time before they are able to feel familiar with policies and practices within the school. Consequently, in those schools where there exists a high staff turnover, or where the programme is relatively new, it is likely that the programme will be seen as a separate activity.

Where the attitude of a number of staff (particularly senior staff) toward the programme is not supportive or is diffident, the work experience programme is also more likely to be seen as a separate programme with little involvement with other subject areas. From the case studies it was clear that the programmes which had the greatest degrees of teacher support and involvement were also the ones which had become part of school policy and which undertook most formal preparation and evaluation activities.

The case study schools indicated that where programmes can show some effort is being made to develop a more thorough approach, staff are also more likely to support them. Teachers are also very aware of the competing demands on the curriculum and are often sceptical of new programmes which require large segments of time. It is not surprising then that new programmes are regarded with some reservation until their value is proved. Teachers will probably be hesitant about integrating such a programme into their subject area until they are able to see value in the programme. It is therefore in the interests of those seeking greater levels of staff support to evaluate the programme regularly in order to provide feedback to staff on its usefulness.

It could be argued that if teachers were aware of ways they could use the work experience programme, this might encourage a broader perspective for the programme rather than a narrow careers focus. The workplace can offer a wealth of information useful in the classroom. For example, topics could include studies on unions, the marketing structure, sex-roles in the workplace, the work ethic in Australia, worker's compensation, computers in the workplace, or studies of particular industries. Students could assemble a range of experiences around a particular topic which could then be pooled to expand their collective knowledge. Although this would require careful planning, such a work experience programme would be no more difficult to organize logistically than a careers oriented programme.

The placement of only a few students at any one time can complicate the programme's integration into the work of the school. As most planning occurs with the consideration of the class as the unit rather than individual students, schools which place a few students at any one time may find it difficult to plan activities which would allow other subject areas to utilize the students' work experience. This could be partially overcome by individual counselling on the students' return, followed by classroom activities after most students have been out on work experience. The problem with this approach is that the students' level of motivation is often heightened as a consequence of the experience. This advantage may be lost somewhat if the follow-up activities occur at a much later date. Sound educational practice would suggest that follow-up activities occur as near to the event as possible. The most beneficial arrangement, therefore, seems to be that, where possible, schools should place students as classroom groups. The classroom groups should be those of subject areas which have indicated support for the programme and which have made modifications to the curriculum to utilize the experiences of students.

Developments have occurred in the advice and assistance teachers are given concerning follow-up activities. These are described in Appendix A.

6.3 Support structures for work experience

Although the survey and case study data indicate that the present situation contradicts this, work experience is an activity not necessarily the responsibility of any specific person nor the province of any one subject area. However, because it is perceived as a careers oriented activity, it is usually considered the responsibility of the YEO, the GO and/or the Careers Adviser. For similar reasons it is usually associated with courses concerned with developing the vocational skills of students, such as the business education and alternative upper school courses.

At the time the study was undertaken only the YEOs had a clear statement regarding their role in the work experience programme. In schools with a YEO it was generally assumed that he or she would take responsibility for the co-ordination of the work experience programme. The support given to YEOs included a manual produced by the Youth Education Branch (with quite specific information relevant to operating work experience programmes) and regular workshop and in-service meetings. Persons newly appointed as YEOs also attended a pre-service workshop before the beginning of the school year.

Guidance Officers are expected to play a variety of roles in schools, including undertaking vocational counselling. The case studies revealed the relationship between their work and the work experience programmes as being distinctive to each school. There seems to be considerable scope for refining the role of the GOs vis-a-vis that of the YEOs if they are to contribute more effectively to the development of work experience as a broadly based transition activity.

Late in 1980 a statement of the role of the Careers Adviser was also issued. In it Careers Advisers were required, as part of their duties, to manage their school's work experience programmes. The case study data indicated some confusion by the Careers Advisers about their role in relation to work experience. In 1980 Careers Advisers had their first formal in-service course concerned with work experience. Prior to that many simply worked from the handbook, or sought advice from either a neighbouring YEO or the Youth Education Branch. In the case studies several Careers Advisers indicated that in the initial phases of the programme they were very uncertain about their

responsibilities, where to begin and whether what they were doing was correct. In this sense, they found the handbook¹ valuable because it was the only written statement on the programme.

Alternative course co-ordinators and business education teachers usually have ready access to the YEO in the school, and work experience for their students is usually co-ordinated by the YEO. This places the YEO centrally in the role of work experience co-ordinator but should not reduce the responsibilities of the teachers concerned to ensure that work experience has appropriate objectives and that classroom follow-up activities ensure that maximum value is obtained from the programme.

Outside the schools, work experience is primarily the responsibility of the Youth Education Branch, and it is through this Branch that many developments related to work experience have been effected. In informal ways, some Careers Advisers have sought advice and support from the Youth Education Branch, but its relationship with Careers Advisers is by no means as clear as it is with YEOs. In view of the concern Careers Advisers have expressed about their roles, it may be necessary to formalize some links so that a definite point of focus is available for conducting in-service courses, offering advice and developing or fostering initiatives in schools not served by a YEO. These links have now been established.

A Work Experience Committee has been functioning within the Education Department for some time. The committee has undertaken some particularly valuable work, especially that involved in reaching agreements whereby work experience could become as widespread as it is now. However, recent developments (such as work experience being perceived as a number of different programmes specifically designed to suit student, school and community needs) may require an expansion of its role. Various working parties might need to be established so that particular issues can be explored and solutions arrived at in ways which accommodate the perspectives of all parties involved. Such working parties should be flexible, however, because rigid and separate structures for the development of work experience is antithetical to the concept which encourages work experience to be seen as an activity relevant to broad areas of a school's curriculum. This would suggest that some mechanism be established to promote the free exchange of ideas and purposes of support, but that these should be loosely organized and not be seen as the province of any one particular branch. Initiatives in this regard will most probably come from prominent participants, but the products of these initiatives should be shared freely.

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1. Work Experience Programmes - Guidelines for teachers.
Education Department of W.A., 1977.

6.4 Sex-stereotyping in occupational choice

Although work experience programmes offer students an opportunity to experiment with careers outside those traditionally associated with males or females, both the survey and case study data collected indicate that boys and girls tend to make stereotypical choices. For females, the choices tend to be in the sales, clerical, support of professionals or hairdressing areas. The majority of males choose work in the trades areas. Students rarely move across the fairly rigid stereotypical boundaries set, although obviously there are instances where this does occur. For example, one female student who was interviewed had undertaken work experience in her anticipated career of an auto-electrician.



Photograph 10: Work experience as an automotive electrician

Work experience could provide an excellent opportunity for both males and females to experiment with careers outside of those traditionally considered to be 'male' or 'female'. Work experience might also be a means of encouraging females to move out of those areas which are becoming more restricted as possible careers (particularly teaching and clerical positions) and into employment areas which offer more scope. Rural communities which have limited employment opportunities for females in the traditional occupations might also utilize the work experience programme to encourage females into other non-stereotypical employment areas more readily available locally.

Clearly, much work still needs to be done and problems need to be faced. Offering work experience to students of either sex in what might not be typical career alternatives may encounter a variety of difficulties and they may result in work experience choices not being viable as careers. Employer and/or union policies may be opposed to it. Parents, employees and other community members may oppose it, partly because it departs from practices to which they are accustomed. These problems will place additional stress on students who make atypical decisions, making it imperative that such situations are discussed in the classroom and accompanied by adequate counselling so that students are fully aware of the implications of their decisions. This point underlines just how essential are the preparation and evaluation aspects of work experience, which emerged in the study as commonly weaker links in schools' programmes.

Schools may need to look closely at whether the procedures used in their work experience programmes reinforce the traditional patterns of career choices students make. At least part of the solution may lie in the way work experience programmes are conducted. Students are generally asked to state a preference (most often this represents their career choice) for work experience, often with little or no counselling about the range of alternatives which might be considered and explored. Among the case studies, only three schools undertook systematic preparation which explored the range of career choices. In one of the three schools this was done in the week prior to the experience, after students had stated preferences.

In many cases students do have access at school to materials on careers. However, in the interviews conducted many students suggested they found the material inappropriate and discussed careers with friends or parents. This confirms findings reported in several other studies (Dunnell, 1980, and Musgrave and Wind, 1978). Families in particular would be naturally conservative in the careers advice they offer. Students, therefore, commonly have limited access to knowledge of the range of opportunities available.

A consequence of this situation and the approaches schools use is that traditional patterns of choices are reinforced and perpetuated. The implications this has for females in particular is that it is tending to lock them into a very narrow range of perceived career choices. Recent evidence (Windshuttle, 1979) also suggests that it is job opportunities in the stereotyped 'female' occupations which are declining in number (particularly in the sales and clerical areas), partly as a consequence of the impact of technology. Schools need to be aware of the channelling

process that can occur and the reinforcement of that process that can result from such activities as work experience. Examination is needed of the reasons behind career decisions that students make and of the impact that school procedures have on these decisions, so that sex stereotypical channelling is at least recognized.

6.5 The special circumstances of rural schools

Although rural schools have often been said to lack adequate transition education provision, this study found that 63 out of 79 rural schools did conduct work experience programmes. The extent of work experience in rural schools partly reflects the placement of Careers Advisers in many district high schools, particularly since 1979. Even so, many readers are likely to be surprised at the extent of penetration work experience has achieved in rural towns. Many people have possibly assumed that because rural centres are small (and hence their employment capacity is much more limited) this would preclude schools in those centres from conducting effective work experience programmes. Though limited placement opportunities pose problems for many rural schools, a large number of district high schools are able to run extensive programmes. Though the numbers of students participating in the programme vary considerably, (from 4 to 62 among the schools surveyed), it is significant that work experience programmes have been adopted in circumstances many would describe as less than ideal.

It has been suggested (Turney, 1980, p.87) that 'schools in rural centres tend to operate quite separately from the communities in which they are situated and that there has been a noticeable lack of success in attempts to build a curriculum that is relevant to the life experiences and job aspirations of the large majority of students'. Work experience may in fact be such a programme that can assist in overcoming this separation. Several schools suggested that, once the local community knew a work experience programme was operating, the level of support offered was both unexpected and overwhelming. For their part, employers commented that they felt a sense of responsibility toward the youth of their community and that work experience was a way they could contribute. The survey data also support this finding. Schools indicated that an important benefit of work experience was the establishment of a close school-community relationship. This is particularly important for rural schools, where the local community can be a valuable learning resource. In this case it is likely that the collective experiences and insights of the community, particularly with regard to local careers and what it is like to be employed in that community, are likely to be much greater than those schools can offer from their own resources.

This situation is probably not fundamentally different from that of metropolitan schools. However, rural schools do not have the same ease of access to other Government agencies, the services of guest speakers, or the resources of large firms, so close liaison with the local community is probably a much more critical element in the effectiveness of their work experience programmes than it is in urban schools.

The survey data suggest that rural schools, on the whole, have a more 'open' work experience programme, in the sense that they offer work experience to all Year 10 students rather than to selected groups of students, as was common in metropolitan schools. One advantage rural schools may have is that work experience is more manageable logistically. For example, in smaller district high schools, placing all Year 10 students may mean the placement of only one class. This should theoretically allow more time for the preparation and follow-up of students, although without a specific time allocation to staff, monitoring students on site may be more difficult. Large schools are pressured by the sheer enormity of numbers of students wanting to participate. These comments need to be qualified by recognizing that rural schools rarely have even one person involved in work experience on a full-time basis. However, other circumstances, such as generally closer school-community relations and less distinct divisions of staff into subject areas, do provide some advantages in the running of work experience in rural areas.

Rural schools not offering a work experience programme mostly explained that this was not the result of a lack of interest by either the employing community or the teaching staff. The reasons given included the lack of placement opportunities to students, the problem of students who lived on outlying farms finding it difficult to travel in to a workplace when work times were different from school times, the time required by staff to operate the programme being considered prohibitive, or a Careers Adviser not being available within the school to operationalize the programme.

To overcome the placement problem, some rural schools send students to a larger regional centre nearby. In one case study school this arrangement was funded through the Priority Country Schools Programme (PSCP) and co-ordinated by the Manpower Planning Panel located in the regional centre. This approach required planning and assistance from the sponsoring centre in order to organize placements and accommodation. Several other schools have used the YEO in the regional centre to organize this type of experience for outlying students. Another school stated that, though assistance was offered by the YEO to place students, the

costs involved in transport and accommodation caused the programme to be abandoned when approaches to various funding agencies proved fruitless. Other rural schools in this position have billeted students out or accommodated students (where costs were not a problem) in a school hostel or camp school.

It may be valuable for the Education Department to explore the establishment of regional structures to support work experience programmes. Although this does occur to some extent, for example in Albany and Bunbury, and in a more established way in Kalgoorlie,¹ if work experience programmes continue to expand, small rural schools will need to consider making more extensive use of regional centres. The need to co-ordinate this initiative is imperative and will require consideration of a range of issues such as accommodation, travelling and personnel.

As a consequence of recent developments, those rural schools which have difficulty in setting up a programme or in meeting the needs of particular students (for example, exposure to careers not available in the rural town) are able to participate in the Rural-City Work Experience Scheme funded by the Commonwealth-State School to Work Transition Programme. This scheme commenced operations in 1980, setting out to give preference to students in small district high schools. As part of this study a survey was conducted of a sample of students involved in this scheme. Of students surveyed, the majority (80.3 per cent) stated they participated in work experience, although some combined this with career exploration activities. Such activities included visits to the careers reference centre (32.4 per cent), visits to educational institutions such as the technical colleges, colleges of advanced education and universities (25.2 per cent) and visits to places organized to take into account particular students' interests (42.3 per cent). The majority of students stated they found such visits helpful, in that they provided information on the actual work required, social implications, academic qualifications necessary and careers available.

The students involved were usually placed in a range of occupations including professional (16.3 per cent), semi-professional (14.4 per cent), apprenticeship (16.3 per cent), general (18.9 per cent) and clerical (29 per cent). For many students (46 per cent), this represented their chosen career; however, the remainder of students were uncertain and were still investigating career choices.

1. Supported by the PCSP and the Manpower Planning Panel.

Part of the rationale for the development of the scheme was that it would give students experiences in work situations that could not be gained within their local community, and would cater for those students who found it difficult, because of distance, to travel to their local communities. Of those students who responded, 67 per cent indicated that this type of experience was not available within their community and 50 per cent said they were able to use the experience to collect information on careers not available in their home town. However, even if the experience had been available in their home town, the workplace usually did not have the level of complexity found within the city.

It was not surprising to find that students stated the most important outcomes were learning about the complexity of life and work within the city (56 per cent), and the enhancement of the students' education for life experiences (46.2 per cent). Students also suggested they were more aware of what it was like to 'use' a city, work in a city, and decide on their preparedness to cope with a city life-style. That students do not feel confident about working within the city is indicated in the high percentage (61 per cent) who indicated they felt nervous. However, as a consequence of this experience, 92 per cent of students said they felt somewhat better prepared and more confident about working in the city if it was necessary.

Some teachers in rural schools have been apprehensive or critical about the scheme, believing it might encourage the drift of rural teenagers to urban areas. However, Sher (1977, p.285) makes the point that 'the best curriculum for rural children is one that not only equips them with skills relevant to both rural and urban life, but also gives them sufficient unbiased information to make a judgement as to the kind of community in which they would like to live and work'. A large percentage of rural students, will live and work in a large regional town or in the city (Turney, 1980, p.90). Developing the skills which will enable them to function effectively in several environments should therefore be an important focus of transition education in rural schools. Participation in work experience in the city can be seen as assisting the development of such skills. The points noted from the survey about students initially being nervous about working in the city but becoming much more confident after the experience are pertinent here. The fact that students also reported using the city experience to gather career information and generally gain exposure to a larger range of different attitudes, values, career experiences and role models not possible in their local community is also important. Several research studies (e.g. Behrens, 1978; Musgrave and Wind, 1978) suggested that the

limited range of higher status jobs available in rural areas has encouraged lower expectations. Thus city work experience may go some way to developing within rural students higher educational and occupational aspirations.

6.6 A review of the guidelines

The guidelines for work experience were established by the Education Department in 1977 and represented a pooling of the experiences of individuals running programmes both here and in other States. They were designed to provide an outline to schools of steps which could be taken in the implementation of work experience programmes, presumably resulting in those programmes more readily attaining their stated objectives. Although several of the procedures were obligatory (such as those regarding payment and insurance), schools were free to interpret the guidelines to suit their own purposes and to establish or continue with their own procedures if they were considered more appropriate.

It was important, therefore, that this study consider how schools regarded the guidelines. It was possible that schools might see them as outdated as a result of new developments, or unrealistic in terms of the time and resources schools had available.

The survey and case study data indicate that most schools tried to follow the procedures established but few were able to comply with all the guidelines. Rarely did this situation result from a feeling that certain of the guidelines were irrelevant or inappropriate. More commonly, schools were not able to incorporate all of the guidelines without altering their approach to work experience and/or increasing the resources they used to operate their programme.

Work experience programmes can be a major and complex innovation within schools. As an activity, work experience focuses on content matter either uncommon to schools or not previously dealt with in ways now suggested. It urges modification of present curricula to deal with the content; it imposes strains on school timetables; it requires the development of structures to maintain the programme; and it encourages the development of processes such as school-community (or workplace) interaction to an extent uncommon in the school's usual operation. The combination of these factors obviously makes its implementation difficult and complex, requiring considerable time and experience.

Work experience programmes as a curriculum innovation are only in the initial development stages. Relevant to this point, it can be said that not one of the schools involved in this study seemed to have dealt fully with all of the issues raised in the preceding paragraph. Therefore, to assess the guidelines as being inappropriate, when many schools have not been able to develop mechanisms for meeting those guidelines, would be unduly harsh.

Greater value will probably result from looking at the aspects of the guidelines with which schools have had most difficulty and developing ways of assisting them to use approaches or mechanisms designed to bring about their achievement. After moving in this direction, some schools may eventually want to take the position that it is unrealistic to expect that particular guidelines should be met if various approaches tried have been unsuccessful. In these cases schools may want to urge that particular guidelines be modified in light of what is realistically possible within schools.

The data collected in this study suggest that work experience is an extensive activity in our secondary schools. Further, some schools have been operating their programmes for long periods. The circumstances and contexts within which work experience is operating today might not be the same as those existing when their programmes began. Today, work experience programmes have to seek objectives related to career exploration, career confirmation and job placement, among others. This situation really suggests two broad tasks for the Work Experience Committee.

One is to look carefully at the raison d'etre for each guideline and come to some agreement as to the importance of that guideline for the programme. This could mean that some guidelines, such as those associated with the formal preparation, monitoring and evaluation of students, will be confirmed as educationally essential, even though schools may face some difficulty in meeting them. The result of this work will be guidelines which are well founded in the objectives for work experience programmes. These might well be the existing guidelines but, with recent developments relevant to transition education, this would be a surprising outcome.

The second task will be to review the guidelines from the viewpoint of the resources, organizations, skills and support schools will need to run work experience programmes in ways which will comply with the guidelines and attain the objectives stated for these programmes. Evidence in this study suggests that support and promotion activities

will have to concentrate on staff other than those directly involved with work experience. Pursuing the objectives that work experience be seen as an integral part of school policy (especially that relating to transition) and as important to many subject areas would suggest that principals and senior teachers will be key people to involve in support and publicity activities.

6.7 Summary

Many issues have arisen from examining schools operating work experience programmes. Some emanate from the organizational nature of the schools, others from the socio-geographic contexts of the communities in which they are located. Still others emanate from historical circumstances that surround the origins and development of these programmes.

All schools that run work experience programmes are endeavouring to deal with the issues that particularly involve them. In doing so, it would be fair to say that most have found the Education Department's guidelines to be useful. The schools have commonly displayed a willingness to be involved and to consider the implications of what they are doing. Work experience is certainly alive and well in Western Australian schools and, as Appendix A will show, has been the subject of several recent developments, including a review of the guidelines undertaken in 1980. It is with the intent of furthering these developments that the following chapter, focusing on conclusions drawn from this study, has been written.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Work experience programmes have been operating in Government secondary schools in Western Australia for more than a decade. People involved with these programmes, whether they be school principals, teachers, parents, employers or senior officers in the Education Department, usually express favourable comments about their value.

In recent years the Department has increased the support and encouragement it offers to schools operating work experience programmes. In part, these moves have been made in response to initiatives at the school level. In part, also, they appear to have been made as a response to an economic situation in which school-leavers have greater difficulty in finding employment. Whatever the reasons for these developments, the Education Department is now making a further commitment of resources to the operation of work experience programmes. The Department is also making considerable efforts to assist schools to devise, operate and review their programmes.

In quantitative terms, work experience programmes have enjoyed growing success. Increasing numbers of schools, students and employers have become involved in these programmes. The extent of student and school contact with the employing community has similarly increased. In these terms the work experience programmes are successful.

Schools generally claim to follow both the objectives and the procedures established by the Department for work experience programmes. In these terms the support and encouragement mechanisms may also be considered as effective.

However, closer analysis of the data indicates that some problems exist. Tensions are evident within schools concerning the value of work experience. Tensions are also evident between schools and employers relating to certain aspects of the operation of work experience. In many schools there appears to be little integration of work experience with other careers and transition activities. Some of these matters have been discussed in the previous chapter.

Evidence in this study suggests that work experience programmes are undergoing changes. They developed as a response to difficulties experienced by particular groups of students in making a transition from school to employment. Later, the value of work experience was recognized for students involved in vocationally oriented Year 11 courses. In both cases, work experience was oriented towards confirming occupational choices. In addition, students were able to gain direct experiences of work situations. In many cases, this actually raised students' chances of finding work. These programmes clearly focused on Years 10 and 11 and concerned only some of the students, in particular those who had definite career interests and aspirations.

Recently, schools and systems have come under increasing pressure to provide transition-related activities for a wider range of students. Their responses have produced upgraded guidance and careers advice facilities, developments in career exploration courses and an increase in the provision of work experience. However, as far as work experience is concerned, evidence collected in this study suggests that the expansion which has occurred has not generally been accompanied by either a review of the aims of work experience or a thorough analysis of the implications such expansion has for the operation of programmes.

The Education Department has, through its guidelines, encouraged schools to establish aims and operating features for their work experience programmes. The Departmental guidelines describe many possible aims for work experience and discuss implications relating to the operating features of programmes. As such, the guidelines are a framework for schools' programmes. They do not represent policies which schools must accept, except in matters concerning duration and insurance. Clearly, they illustrate flexibility in that schools have been given considerable latitude in the design of their programmes.

Case study data suggest that schools experience difficulty with guideline adaptation. There is clear evidence that many schools conduct extensive work experience programmes and a large proportion of the people involved in this study regarded them positively. However, many teachers commented upon the time factors involved in adapting guidelines and maintaining programmes. School personnel were of the opinion that providing more time would enhance their programmes.

It seems logical that schools be responsible individually for determining details of the aims and operation of their own work experience programmes. However, it also appears that the provision of guidelines and periodic in-service courses to YEOs and Careers Advisers, as undertaken in 1979, is insufficient support for that responsibility to be accepted effectively.

Schools might be encouraged to view work experience as only one aspect of their broader transition education activities. The Education Department's handbook, which was originally written prior to the recent upsurge in interest in transition education, could reflect this situation. It may be that what the handbook presently gives as objectives for work experience would better be regarded as objectives for transition education - some of which might best be achieved by work experience, while others could be pursued through different strategies such as visiting speakers and visits to workplaces.

Such policies as the schools may develop for work experience would best be carried out within that context in ways consistent with other transition education policies. Schools, therefore, may need further assistance in reviewing the aims and operation of their programmes. At present schools have limited human and physical resources to devote to work experience and generally limit involvement in these activities to the YEO, Careers Adviser and business education teachers. In attempting to accommodate the many aims set down in the guidelines, schools inevitably pay lip-service to some. As a consequence, schools face the danger that their efforts may be less effective than they envisage. Further, this may encourage a situation where transition education becomes a specific responsibility for only a few staff members.

If schools want their work experience programmes to pursue the broader aims of developing living skills and personal awareness and improving the careers options and attitudes of their students, then their programmes must be constructed to facilitate achievement of those aims. Questions which would need to be addressed include: Are such programmes best run for Year 10 students? What values would such programmes have for core and option subjects? What roles should teachers have in these programmes? Are there activities other than work experience which can contribute to attaining these goals? If so, what should be the relationship between them and work experience? What duration should work experience programmes have if they address these aims? Are we able to commit both time and resources to the effective running of these programmes?

The operating features of work experience programmes - matters such as responsibilities, timing, preparation activities, ways of involving parents and employers, follow-up and evaluation activities and relationship with the school's day-to-day activities - should flow logically from the aims for those programmes. Schools could well be assisted to determine the aims they want to pursue, not only in work experience but also in their transition activities, to establish the features of their programmes and to review their impact and effectiveness. The chances are that this help will need to be specific and school based. In-service work with school staffs as a whole may be more appropriate than centrally based in-service courses which cater for a small number of personnel from many schools.

A self-analysis and review process seems crucial to the development of more effective work experience programmes as well as the development of the broader context of transition education. The process should also facilitate more effective local community and employer involvement in the development and operation of such programmes. The concept also has direct implications for the type of support given by the Education Department to schools. All support should promote a review process and assist with implementation of programmes. It should also be acknowledged that a reduction in the scope and extent of a school's existing work experience programmes may be a quite legitimate outcome of such a review. The school may decide that, apart from the case of early leavers and vocational course students, careers activities other than work experience are more effective for achieving their transition objectives.

The economic, social and political pressures that have made transition education a major issue are unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future. The experience that schools have gained through their long-term involvement in work experience programmes should be used to best effect in any developments affecting those programmes.

This study suggests that two types of action are needed to make work experience programmes more effective. Actions of the first type would address specific concerns expressed by schools. How to co-ordinate the placement activities of neighbouring schools is one such concern. The study has outlined some attempts that schools have already made to deal with this issue, and Appendix A describes some of the most recent developments in this regard. The need to involve subject departments in the work experience programmes is another major issue. So too is the need to upgrade the preparation and evaluation activities that schools undertake as part of their programmes. These are all specific matters which could be the focus of future Department-school activity.

In some ways the second type of action may both be more important and need earlier implementation. This centres on the need to involve schools in the development of effective transition policies and strategies. If successful, this action will establish the context in which the considerable values of work experience programmes achieve their full potential.

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APPENDIX A: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

It became obvious during the study that some reference would need to be made to recent developments. Much seemed to be happening as those involved in work experience programmes began to develop new ways of coping with problems and as funds became available to initiate new projects. There were developments within the Education Department directed towards co-ordinating sections involved in work experience, the intention being to reach a closer understanding of the potential and objectives of the programmes. These developments are discussed in the first section below.

Many of the new initiatives were made possible by the Commonwealth-State School to Work Transition Programme launched in November, 1979. This five-year plan was designed to encourage various programmes to assist youths in the transition to the workplace. Submissions were invited from groups and organizations active in the transition area. Since work experience was already a very busy area in Western Australia, it is not surprising that the availability of funds allowed a rapid expansion of these activities. Projects that were undertaken usually sought to develop those aspects of work experience which would assist schools to meet the objectives and guidelines for those programmes. Projects undertaken under this initiative are discussed in the section below.

State initiatives

A number of groups interested in transition education have focused increased attention on the work experience programme. Included are the Youth Education Branch, Guidance Branch and business education and upper school alternative course co-ordinators. In all these areas the programme has been promoted systematically during 1980. This has no doubt had an impact on the level of awareness of the programme and the numbers of students participating.

Initiatives under the Commonwealth-State School to Work Transition Scheme

(a) The development of the work experience kit

The work experience kit was developed to assist in the operation of the work experience programme. The kit consists of diaries for students, to act as a record and to structure their experiences; a film and slides presentation on the whole work experience scheme; brochures for use with students, employers and parents; and booklets and charts containing information about the scheme, to act as a guide for employers and unions.

The purpose of the kit is to provide accurate information concerning the programme to all parties, as well as to encourage a more systematic and thorough preparation and evaluation of students. This is accompanied by a new school handbook, which discusses the whole work experience programme and how best to implement it, using all of the available resources. In-service activities are planned to promote the proper use of the kit, which will become available to all schools at the start of the 1981 school year. It is felt such material will be invaluable in promoting a more thorough approach to work experiences within the schools and a means by which the more qualitative aspects of the programme can be emphasized.

(b) Rural-city work experience scheme

This scheme is co-ordinated by the Youth Education Branch and was designed for use by rural schools, particularly small schools which find it difficult to locate sufficient placements for students, or are unable to provide an adequate range of occupational choices for them. It also provides schools with an opportunity to gain additional careers information often not available in their own rural centres.

At the start of 1980 schools were notified they could apply to send approximately 20 students, accompanied by an appropriate staff member, for a period of one week of work experience. Students were accommodated at a city motel, with transport, accommodation and most food costs underwritten by the scheme. The central location of Beatty Lodge is valuable because it provides access to most transport routes.

Schools are encouraged to find their own placements for students; however, assistance is also given by two co-ordinators appointed to support the scheme and located in the Youth Education Branch head office. Students are briefed thoroughly on their work experience placements, and travel to their workplaces on public transport. The accompanying staff member visits students on-site during the week's placement.

The scheme has been well received and supported by many rural schools, and during 1980 sponsored approximately 850 rural students.

(c) Work experience co-ordinators

Three co-ordinators were appointed to the Youth Education Branch in head office to assist with duties related to work experience initiatives. These included support and co-ordination of the rural-city work experience

scheme; the development of materials associated with the work experience kit; assistance to various workshops, particularly relating to co-ordination initiatives; and the active promotion of the work experience programme throughout the community. Since April 1980, six co-ordinators have been appointed in country regions.

(d) Co-ordination workshops

In each region where several schools were involved, a series of workshops were conducted to explore the establishment of co-ordination mechanisms. The first was held in the south-west region of the State to trial the techniques. Persons invited represented those groups in the region involved in operating work experience in that community (technical schools, private schools, CYSS and Government schools).

The workshops explored various issues regarding co-ordination, resulting in the establishment of a committee to deal with the problem. The committee was able to appoint a special District Youth Organizer (DYO) with specific responsibilities for approaching the employing community with requests for placements and co-ordinating placements made so that employers are not over-used. In this way, the problem of multiple approaches by various groups to the same employer is avoided. Although most co-ordination committees are in their infancy, the committee established in 1979 in the south-west region has reported experiencing a very successful year of operation. This mechanism has great potential for dealing with the problems associated with co-ordination however, its success requires the continued support of all bodies involved in work experience.

(e) Youth Education Officers and Career Advisers

Additional numbers of YEOs were appointed in Western Australian Government schools to assist in the transition of youth into the workplace. Since the conduct of work experience programmes is a major responsibility of these officers, this means work experience should achieve even greater penetration in the community in future.

Summary

A number of initiatives have taken place since 1979. Not only has increased attention been deliberately focused on work experience programmes, but a range of activities have been funded under the Commonwealth-State School to Work Transition Programme. These developments have sought to promote those aspects of the programme which will assist schools in meeting the guidelines for work experience programmes, many of which have emerged in this study as issues that schools have had most difficulty in handling.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

RESEARCH BRANCH

The Education Department is currently undertaking a survey of careers guidance and work experience in Secondary Schools.

The survey questionnaire is composed of three (3) parts:

PART A GENERAL INFORMATION
PART B CAREERS GUIDANCE INFORMATION
PART C WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES

If your school does not operate a careers guidance or work experience programme, please complete all of PART A and return.

If your school operates a careers guidance but no work experience programme, complete PARTS A and B. Should your school offer both a careers guidance and work experience programme, complete PART A except Questions 6 and 7, and all of PART B and C.

Please complete all questions where appropriate, and add written comments if you feel this will be useful.

Your co-operation in completing the questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

PART A. INFORMATION

1. NAME OF SCHOOL: _____
NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING FORM: _____
POSITION: _____
DATE: _____

For Questions 2 to 5, place the appropriate number in the box provided.

2. SCHOOL TYPE:

- S.H.S. 1
H.S. 2
D.H. I. 3
D.H. II. 4
SPECIAL SCHOOL 5

3. REGION:

- METRO. SOUTH-EAST 01
METRO. SOUTH-WEST 02
METRO. NORTH-EAST 03
METRO. NORTH-WEST 04
UPPER GREAT SOUTHERN 05
GREAT SOUTHERN 06
COUNTRY SOUTH-WEST 07
MIDLANDS 08
GERALDTON 09
GOLDFIELDS 10
PILBARA 11
KIMBERLY 12
YILGARN 13

4. Does your school have a career guidance programme?

- YES 1
NO 2

5. Does your school operate a work experience programme?

YES 1
NO 2

☐

If your school DOES NOT offer a work experience programme,
please complete Question 6 and 7.

All others move on to PART B.

6. What would you perceive as the THREE (3) main advantages to be
gained from operating a work experience programme?
7. List the THREE (3) biggest problems you would anticipate if
setting up a work experience programme at your school.

PART B. CAREERS GUIDANCE

1. Who is responsible for careers guidance at your school?

Use the following codes:

DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY 1
INDIRECT RESPONSIBILITY 2
NO RESPONSIBILITY 3

Guidance Officer
Youth Education Officer
Careers Adviser
Year Master
Alternative Course Co-ordinator
Teaching Staff
Principal/Deputy
Other; Specify

2. What use is made of the following activities with Years 8 to 12?

Place a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

	YEAR	8	9	10	11	12
Visits from C.E.S. officers						
Careers nights						
Visiting speakers (community)						
Vocational films, tapes, slides						
'Careers Education' Course						
Simulated work situations						
Job observation						
Work experience						
Factory visits						
Career exploration						
Job seeking skills						
None of the above						
Other; Specify						

PART C. WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES

1. Please indicate the approximate time commitment to work experience of the following persons or groups of person.

Use the following codes:

NONE 0
 <1 hr/wk 1
 1-4 hrs/wk 2
 5-10 hrs/wk 3
 >10 hrs/wk 4

Youth Education Officer	
Guidance Officer	
Career Advisor	
Year Master	
Teaching Staff	
Principal/Deputy	
Community (e.g., Rotary)	
Alternative Course Co-ordinator	
Parents	
Office Staff	
Other; Specify	

2. Which of the following statement(s) best describes the programme type(s) operating in your school?

Place a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

One half day per week
Two half days per week
One day per week
Two days per week
One full week and one per year
One full week and two per year
One full week and three per year
Two full weeks
Other; Specify

3. In the columns provided (A,B,C,D)*, place the code number which most closely describes the degree of emphasis your programme places on each of the aims in the table below.

Use the following codes:

MAJOR EMPHASIS
 MODERATE EMPHASIS 2
 MINOR EMPHASIS 3
 NO EMPHASIS 4

IF your school operates a number of programmes with differing emphasis (e.g., for Commercial Girls classes, a greater emphasis may be given to JOB TRAINING), please identify the programme(s) below and fill in the appropriate column(s).

A. GENERAL SCHOOL PROGRAMME _____
 B. _____
 C. _____
 D. _____

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

AIMS	*	A	B	C	D
<u>WORK PREPARATION</u> : Develop habits and attitudes which apply to work in general, rather than the particular jobs.					
<u>LIVING SKILLS</u> : Develop habits which would help the student to function independently when he left school.					
<u>PERSONAL AWARENESS</u> : Give students a greater confidence in themselves; an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses; the development of a positive self concept.					
<u>EMPLOYER AWARENESS</u> : Promote an awareness among employers of the problems students face in the transition process; encourage an active role in the educative process.					
<u>PARENT AWARENESS</u> : Involve parents in the educative process; develop parental confidence in their ability to guide the decisions of their children.					
<u>JOB TRAINING</u> : Develop marketable skills for particular jobs.					
<u>JOB PLACEMENT</u> : Secure a job for the student by bringing him into contact with the employer, and allow him to demonstrate his abilities.					
<u>ATTITUDE</u> : Bring about positive modification in students attitude to school.					
<u>CAREER OPTIONS</u> : Improve knowledge of a number of career options; facts about particular jobs and working conditions.					
<u>OCCUPATIONAL GOALS</u> : Decide on the educational goals which are relevant to the career or careers that interest them e.g., when they leave school; types of subjects needed.					

4. How many students in each year level have participated in your work experience programme so far in 1979?

YEAR	8	9	10	11	12
MALES					
FEMALES					

5. Which of the following statements best describes the majority of students involved in work experience at your school.

Use the following codes:

- High academic achievers 1
 Average academic achievers 2
 Low academic achievers 3
 A wide range of academic achievers .. 4

☐

6. For each of Years 8 to 12, please indicate which students are offered work experience using the following codes:

- All students 1
 Some students 2
 No students 3

YEAR 8 9 10 11 12

--	--	--	--	--

7. Which groups of students are given preference to participate in the work experience programme?

(Space was provided for listing up to 4 groups)

8. Which particular students, or groups of students, present problems of placement in work experience?

(Space was provided for listing up to 4 groups)

9. How are students allocated to a particular "work experience"?

10. Are students offered MORE THAN ONE (>1) work experience per year?

YEAR: 8 9 10 11 12

ALL ARE

ONLY SOME ARE

NONE ARE

11. In what ways (if any), are the following groups involved in any of the possible activities of work experience?

GROUPS INVOLVED	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THESE GROUPS
STUDENTS	<u>PREPARATION</u> (e.g., . selection . allocation . initial employer contact . student preparation . parent information	
COUNSELLING STAFF		
STAFF		
PARENTS		
EMPLOYERS		
COMMUNITY		
STUDENTS	<u>THE ACTUAL 'WORK' EXPERIENCE</u> (e.g., . who maintains contact . student on-job evaluation . employer evaluation of student . teaching staff visits	
COUNSELLING STAFF		
STAFF		
PARENTS		
EMPLOYERS		
COMMUNITY		
STUDENTS	<u>EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP</u> (e.g., . student discussion and activities . careers follow up . employer evaluation or references . parent and/or employer meetings . employer thank-you's . staff evaluation of students behaviour	
COUNSELLING STAFF		
STAFF		
PARENTS		
EMPLOYERS		
COMMUNITY		

12. Do you liaise with other schools who are operating work experience programmes?

Use the following codes:

OFTEN 1
SOMETIMES 2
NEVER 3

☐

If OFTEN or SOMETIMES, the major purpose could be described as:

Use the following codes:

A FORMAL CO-ORDINATING FUNCTION
(e.g., to share employers etc.) 1
INFORMAL SUPPORT 2
Other; Specify

☐

13. List the THREE (3) most SUCCESSFUL or INNOVATIVE features of your work experience programme.
14. List the THREE (3) most DIFFICULT problems you have to deal with operating the work experience programme.
15. What BENEFITS do you feel are being derived by students participating in the work experience programme? List, IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.
(Space was provided for listing up to 4 benefits)
16. What other BENEFITS would you like to see the IDEAL work experience programme produce? List IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.
(Space was provided for up to 3 other benefits)
17. To what extent have the various subject areas modified their programmes as a result of 'work experience'?

Use the following codes:

No modification 1
Minor modification 2
Major modification 3

English
Social Studies
Maths
Science
Optional Areas

FURTHER COMMENTS:

Should you have any queries regarding any question, please do not hesitate to contact SUSAN ROBERTSON, Education Research Officer on Ph. 322 1711.

THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

The Administrative Assistant
Insurance Section
Education Department
Parliament Place
WEST PERTH, 6005

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES
(STATISTICAL RETURN)

SCHOOL _____

DATE _____

CONTACT _____

POSITION _____

STUDENT'S NAME	YEAR LEVEL	SEX M/F	TYPE OF JOB (eg plumber; clerk)	NAME & ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	TYPE OF W/E (eg no.day/wk)	FROM/TO	OTHER DETAILS
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							

APPENDIX C

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